

INVESTIGATING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN SUCCESSFUL
SCHOOLS SERVING ELA LEARNERS: TELLING THE STORY

by

Wendy Rubin

B.A., University of Colorado Boulder, 1990

M.Ed., University of Illinois Chicago, 1994

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This thesis for the Education Doctorate degree by
Wendy Rubin
has been approved for the Doctoral Studies in Education Program
by
Connie L. Fulmer, Chair
Carolyn Haug
Heather Beck
John Cumming

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Wendy Rubin (Ed.D. Doctoral Studies in Education)

Investigating Leadership Practices in Successful Schools Serving ELA Learners: Telling the Story

Thesis directed by Professor Connie L. Fulmer.

ABSTRACT

This study is one of five thematic dissertations, which focus on investigating the leadership practices of principals leading successful schools serving ELA learners. Schools selected for participation in this study had (a) an open enrollment policy, (b) at least 40% of total enrollment consisting of ELL students, (c) a total School Performance Framework (SPF) rating greater than 49% for elementary schools, and great than 45% for middle schools and high schools, (d) at least 50% of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch, (e) have gains on the CSAP/TCAP and CELA tests for the past three years relative to schools serving the same grade levels, and (f) a principal in place for at least three years. The conceptual framework for this study was constructed from two evidence-based frameworks (VAL-ED Matrix and the ES-I Framework) derived from research on learner-centered leadership. The 360-degree VAL-ED survey provided evidence of the leadership strengths of the principal. From these findings, interview protocol questions were selected. Additionally, a narrative interview protocol was used to uncover critical and life incidents that influenced the development, implementation, and maintenance of the leadership practice of this principal. A cross-case analysis of raw data from four other principal interviews was conducted and themes of life and work experiences were uncovered. Results from this study can be useful to other principals, professional development of principals, and for preparation programs who train future principals.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.

Approved: Connie L. Fulmer

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DEDICATION

To my husband Lance and my daughters Scarlett and Stella for their patience, support and love.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the principal of a large Denver-area high school, I am acutely aware of the need not only to manage my school well, keep students and adults safe, offer comprehensive choice in course offerings, and administer state and federal assessments, but also of the more compelling need to ensure students are learning and growing; that is, achieving academically in a way that prepares them for what lies ahead for each and every one of them. Most students will choose higher education, some will choose trade schools, and some will choose to enter directly into the workforce. While the pathways these students will embark upon post-high school might be similar, their backgrounds are all quite different. For an increasing number of students, their public school experience includes having to learn English while trying to learn content. Non-native English speakers can be found in schools across the United States whether those schools be in rural, suburban, or urban settings. Moral and ethical responsibility demands that we as educators provide English Language Acquisition learners (ELA learners) the same equity of access to education that we offer all students. I, along with my staff, have struggled to understand how to best serve ELA learners in a way that demonstrates achievement commensurate with their native-English speaking peers. My need to provide leadership in this area is clear, as ELA learner populations continue to grow and their achievement as a group, in most cases, continues to languish.

The population of ELA learners in the United States is increasing each year. According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, the

population of English language learners enrolled in public schools serving pre-kindergarten through grade 12 increased by 63.54% between 1994 – 1995 and 2009 – 2010, representing more than 5.2 million children. The increase of ELA-learners is accompanied by a wide variety of language backgrounds, as there are as many as 6,500 living languages spoken and used in the world (Rieger & McGrail, 2006). Many schools and school districts across the country have struggled to understand how to teach students who are not native English speakers. Further, school leaders have struggled to know what professional development to offer staff to enable them to better serve ELA-learners, and they have struggled in working with the students and their families. Certainly, the increase in numbers of ELA learners from diverse backgrounds has outpaced the ability of the district, school, and school leaders to offer meaningful academic programming for students.

In Denver Public Schools (DPS), the second largest school district in Colorado and fastest growing urban school district in the United States, ELA learners in the 2011–2012 school year made up 34% of the approximately 81,800 students enrolled. In some schools, the population of ELA learners is as high as 78%. In 2009, there were 123 different languages identified as being the primary language spoken in homes of students attending DPS schools (retrieved from <http://ela.dpsk12.org/> June 4, 2012). While it might appear that effecting growth in achievement in such a diverse and mounting ELA learner population would be improbable at best, there are in fact schools that have established growth patterns in ELA learner populations and are demonstrating continued movement toward the academic achievement and success of many children and young adults.

Schools are inherently human organizations. Ideally, they exist to provide academic and social opportunities that serve not only the individual but the greater good of society as well. It stands to reason that leadership of these institutions is fundamental to the success of the schools, and hence to the success of the students that school leaders serve. Put simply, principal leadership practices and behaviors impact achievement. Understanding leadership practices and behaviors of principals in successful schools serving ELA learners bisects two critical areas of educational research and adds value to study in both areas individually, as well as in a third, combined arena of leadership for ELA learner achievement.

Statement of Problem

A compelling question exists: Why do some schools have documented success in their work with ELA learners while other schools show no or little gain in academic achievement indicators? Understanding what sets successful schools apart from those that continue to struggle in meeting ELA learner needs is elusive. Thinking about this problem systemically and at the school level, a review of the literature on the effects of school leadership indicates that leadership impacts student achievement. Studying principal leadership in successful schools serving ELA learners can help to define those leadership practices that are value added for student achievement. This case study is designed to discover and name the specific leadership practices and stories behind principals' success in schools that are showing strong achievement trends in ELA learner populations.

Purpose

The purpose of this case study—which is part of a larger multiple-case thematic dissertation study focused on the leadership practices of principals leading successful schools serving ELA learners—is to identify specific and particularized *leadership practices* identified by the principal as *making the difference* in the school reaching the levels of student achievement that resulted in this school having gains on the CSAP and CELA tests for three concurrent years.

Research Questions

Research questions that guide this study are listed below.

1. Using the definition of a leadership practice as a guide (developed in chapter two), what are the specific and particularized self-identified leadership practices being used by the principal in this study to ensure a positive impact of that school on student growth/achievement?
2. How do the identified successful leadership practices align with key conceptual and evidence-based frameworks (VAL-ED Matrix and the Essential Supports & Indicators Framework) used in this study?
3. How do stories of this principal's critical incidents (both work and life related) contribute to an understanding of how self-identified leadership practices emerged and flourished within this particular school and community context?
4. What are the common elements of principals' critical incidents, both work and life related, that contribute to an understanding of how the principals

developed, implemented, and maintained these successful leadership practices?

5. Based on a review of relevant literature (the conceptual underpinnings and evidenced-based strategies) and evidence gathered in this study, what is an applied definition of a leadership practice?

Conceptual Frameworks

Two specific evidence-based conceptual frameworks that examine leadership practices and behaviors linked to student outcomes have been selected to guide this study. The first conceptual framework, the VAL-ED Matrix, comes from evidence-based research (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott & Cravens, 2009) underpinning the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education. The VAL-ED Matrix, created by the intersection of six core components and six key processes, illustrates 36 specific areas of learner-centered leadership. The second conceptual framework, the Essential Supports and Indicators (ES-I) framework, comes from the work of researchers (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010) studying school improvement in Chicago. The ES-I framework is built from five essential supports and fourteen indicators. According to Bryk et al. (2010) their work was significantly influenced by several areas of work. These influences include prior research on effective schools, ongoing CCSR [Consortium on Chicago School Research] research in Chicago, as well as experiences in school intervention of the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago, along with sustained conversations with local stakeholders assembled by the Chicago Public Schools. Both of these conceptual frameworks are used in the design of this study, the

development of interview protocols, and to guide data analysis. The two conceptual frameworks are detailed below.

VAL-ED Matrix

VAL-ED core components and key processes produce a matrix of 36 areas in which principals can be evaluated (see Figure 1 below). The core components that the VAL-ED identifies are those characteristics within schools that have been shown through research to support learning and enhance teaching (Goldring et al., 2009). The core components are broad categories that describe a culture of learning and professional behaviors. The six core components include:

Core Components	Key Processes					
	Planning	Implementing	Supporting	Advocating	Communicating	Monitoring
High Standards for Student Learning						
Rigorous Curriculum (content)						
Quality Instruction (pedagogy)						
Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior						
Connections to External Communities						
Performance Accountability						

Figure 1. VAL-ED matrix created by six core components and six key processes.

1. High Standards for Student Learning- individual, team, and school goals for rigorous student academic and social learning.
2. Rigorous Curriculum- ambitious academic content provided to all students in core academic subjects.

3. Quality Instruction- effective instructional practices that maximize student academic and social learning.
4. Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior- integrated communities of professional practice in the service of student academic and social learning. There is a healthy school environment in which student learning is the central focus.
5. Connections to External Communities- linkages to family and/or other people and institutions in the community that advance academic and social learning.
6. Systemic Performance Accountability- individual and collective responsibility among leadership, faculty, and students for achieving the rigorous academic and social learning goals.

The key processes are actions of the principal that influence the school community and teachers within the core components in specific ways. The six key processes include:

1. Planning- articulating the shared direction and coherent policies, practices, and procedures for realizing high standards of student performance.
2. Implementing- leaders implement; they put into practice the activities necessary to realize high standards for student performance.
3. Supporting- leaders create enabling conditions; they secure and use the financial, political, technological, and human resources necessary to promote academic and social learning
4. Advocating- leaders promote the diverse needs of students within and beyond the school. Advocating for the best interests and needs of all children is a key process of learning-centered leadership.

5. Communicating- leaders develop, utilize, and maintain systems of exchange among members of the school and with its external communities.
6. Monitoring- systematically collecting and analyzing data to make judgments that guide decisions and actions for continuous improvement.

The VAL-ED Matrix was chosen as the conceptual framework for this study for several reasons. The matrix identifies specific, research-based components and processes that provide a rich data source when studying leadership. The principal's adeptness within core components and key processes is assessed not only by the principal, but also by the teachers in the building and the supervisor of the principal. This allows for deeper contextual understanding of the work of the principal in that particular milieu.

Additionally, the framework lends itself to guiding the development of the interview protocols and research instruments for this study, as well as the analysis of data.

Essential Supports and Indicators

The second framework, the ES-I, is constructed of five essential supports directly related to school improvement (see Figure 2 below). These essential supports have a total of 14 additional indicators that were derived from research in the Chicago Public Schools (Bryk et al., 2010) and identified leadership as the driver of other practices, supports and conditions that impact student outcomes. The five essential supports include (a) leadership as the driver for change, (b) parent-community ties, (c) professional capacity, (d) a student-centered learning climate, and (e) instructional guidance (p. 46). The fourteen key indicators of the ES-I framework are (a) school leadership, (b) teacher ties to the community, (c) parent involvement, (d) teacher background, (e) frequency of professional development, (f) quality of professional development, (g) changes in human

resources (h) work orientation, (i) professional community, (j) safety and order, (k) academic support, (l) curriculum alignment, (m) applications emphasis, and (n) basic skills emphasis.

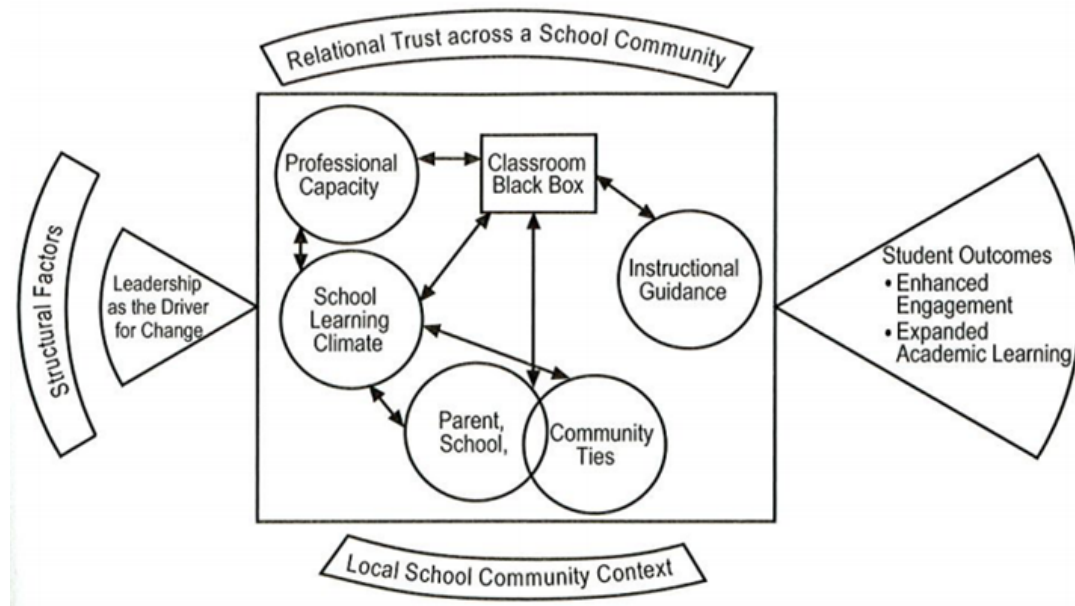


Figure 2. Essential supports and indicators framework.

The ES-I framework offers contextual depth as well as a systems perspective to this study. It will be used, in addition to the core components and key processes of the VAL-ED Matrix, to develop interview protocols to be used with the principal. The analysis of interview data through the lens of the ES-I framework and the VAL-ED Matrix will broaden the scope of study of the principal's leadership practices.

Significance of Study

This study is significant because it is focused on the leadership practices of principals of successful schools serving ELA learners during a time when the numbers of ELA learners in school populations across the United States is growing (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2011). While much has been written about leadership, little if any research has identified proven leadership practices for

producing student achievement in context, and much less research has been conducted on how principals lead successful schools that serve ELA learners.

Additionally, this study is significant because of the selection of the conceptual frameworks used to study the issue of leadership for ELA learners. With the development of the VAL-ED Survey instrument and publication of the extensive body of work by Bryk et al. (2010) on improving schools resulting in the ES-I framework (e.g., five essential supports and fourteen key indicators for success), strong evidence-based conceptual frameworks and tools are now available for use in conducting case studies to identify specific and particularized leadership practices of principals currently serving in schools identified as being successful in serving ELA learners.

Evaluating leadership practices of principals leading successful schools serving ELA learners can contribute to more thoughtful hiring of principals, specific and targeted professional development for principals, and augmentation and support of particular leadership practices. Statistically significant quantitative evidence, as well as compelling qualitative evidence, exists to support the connection between principals' actions, values, and behaviors with improvement in schools that consequently leads to improvements in student achievement (Day et al., 2009, p.1).

Finally, by examining successful school leadership with the added lens of achievement in ELA learner populations, this case study will help to highlight specific leadership practices or evidence of the structural definition of leadership practices in general that may better serve a typically under-served population of students and families. Investigating leadership practices of principals in schools that show sustained growth in ELA learner populations has the potential to offer valuable insight for

researchers, policy makers and district leadership. All of these examples illustrate why this study is warranted and this research is significant.

Research Assumptions

The design of this study includes several research assumptions. The criteria used to pick the school eligible to participate as a “successful school” was determined through a concurrent study being conducted in Denver Public Schools by the University of Colorado Denver. The school selected for this case study was identified as being successful based on five criteria for inclusion, one of which was growth as evidenced through standardized achievement data provided by the CSAP/TCAP and CELA.

Another assumption of this study is that the leadership practices of the principal impacted student achievement growth through having been in place as principal at that specific school for at least three years. A third assumption is that the evidence-based leadership frameworks used in this study to create the interview protocols and the related codes will be useful in identifying the specific and particularized leadership practices that most impact student achievement at this school. A final assumption is that while specific and particularized leadership practices that are identified may not be transferable to other schools with a high percentage of ELA learners, what is learned about how these principals use leadership practices (leaders, followers, and contexts) can be generalized and contribute to a better understanding of the leadership practice construct.

Limitations/Delimitations

Limitations of this study include the choice of the school and its principal. Does the school site and principal best fit the learners and leader this study seeks to identify? In Denver Public Schools where this study takes place, only 22 schools out of 162

qualified for potential participation based upon growth in student achievement. Of the 22 schools that initially qualified, only 13 remained eligible for participation when assessed for principal tenure of three or more years at a particular school. Thus, limitation exists in the size of the pool of candidates for the study. Additionally, the results of the specific and particularized leadership practices cannot be generalized to other principals and schools. These limitations are acknowledged, and the study design addresses them as follows: the case study school and principal were chosen based upon the large number of identified ELA learners, the number of students living in poverty at that school, and the tenure of three years or more at that school of the principal. Moreover, the school has an open enrollment policy, which is critical in ensuring that students at the school are of varied backgrounds and abilities, and not specially selected by the school for attendance based upon prior academic performance.

Operational Definitions

The following operational definitions are used for the purposes of this study:

- ELL (English Language Learner) - Widely accepted term used to identify students who are not native English speakers.
- ELA learners (English Language Acquisition Learner) – Term used by Denver Public Schools to identify students who are not native English speakers.
- ES-I (Essential Supports and Indicators Framework) - a set of defined practices derived from the work of Bryk et al. (2010) that provide the composition for a framework for leadership and school improvement.
- CELA (Colorado English Language Assessment) – Statewide test used in Colorado to assess students who are identified as English Language Learners.

- CSAP (Colorado State Assessment Program) – Statewide test used in Colorado to assess students in reading and writing in grades 3 – 10, and in science in grades 5, 8, and 10. Replaced by TCAP in 2012.
- TCAP (Transitional Colorado Assessment Program) – Statewide test used in Colorado to assess students in reading and writing in grades 3 – 10, and in science in grades 5, 8, and 10.
- VAL-ED (Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education)- an evidence based matrix that evaluates the intersection of six core concepts and 6 key processes.

Summary

This chapter discusses the growing number of ELA learners nationally and locally, and the need for understanding of leadership practices that promote ELA learner achievement. A lack of knowledge exists with regard to the specific and particularized school leadership practices of principals that make a difference in student achievement as measured by growth scores on standardized tests. Research questions have been identified that will guide this study in the focus upon leadership practices of principals leading successful schools serving ELA learners.

Two evidence-based conceptual frameworks are presented in this chapter as foundational to this study. The first framework, the VAL-ED Matrix, focuses on learner-centered leadership with six core components and six key processes. The second conceptual framework, the ES-I, developed by Bryk et al. (2010), offers leadership as the driver for change in influencing the five essential supports and fourteen indicators in the work of school improvement.

This research is significant in several ways. Increasing numbers of ELA learners in the United States demand that schools be responsive to the specific educational needs

of this population. The selection of two conceptual frameworks of leadership that are focused upon student achievement and school improvement add depth and breadth to the discussion of leadership practices. While this specific case study is contextually dependent, findings with regard to leadership practices can be generalized beyond this one principal and one school.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature regarding leadership practices in schools. Areas of research discussed include the following sections: (a) precursors of a leadership practice construct, (b) earlier references to leadership practices, (c) conceptual frameworks that support defining a leadership practice and (d) what we know about leadership for ELA learners. The organization of this research illustrates the importance of leadership to school outcomes over the decades. The first section organizes the key references that serve as precursors to a leadership practice construct and includes three areas: (a) effective schools research, (b) direct and indirect principal effects on student achievement, (c) and instructional leadership. The second section targets the literature with early references to the idea of a leadership practice. These include the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI), the High Performance-High Poverty (HP-HP) literature, and the underpinnings of *distributed leadership*. The third section examines two conceptual frameworks drawn from this literature that best support the definition of the construct of a leadership practice. This chapter ends with a compilation from the literature of what works and what we know about leadership for impacting the academic success of ELA learners.

Precursors of a Leadership Practice Construct

To create a definition and understanding of principal leadership practices in schools, reviewing prior research and foundational literature is critical. Research about effective schools, instructional leadership, and principal behaviors provide context and

background in the quest to define leadership practices and create a leadership practice construct.

Effective Schools Research

In 1966, the U.S. Department of Education commissioned researcher James Coleman to author a paper discussing the effectiveness of schools in the United States. In his paper, which came to be known as the 1966 Coleman Report – Equality of Educational Opportunity, Coleman concluded that schools did not make a significant difference in student success. Coleman asserted that family background made the difference in whether a student could learn and be successful, and that schools could do little for students who came from poor homes, particularly those that did not value or understand the purpose of education (retrieved from <http://www.mes.org/esr.html>). In response to the 1966 Coleman Report numerous researchers (Brookover & Lezotte, 1978; Edmonds, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston 1979) set out to prove that indeed schools do make a difference and conducted studies that are foundational to what would become the effective schools research movement.

The seminal work of Brookover and Lezotte (1979) compares the differences in effectiveness between schools improving in student achievement and those schools losing ground in student achievement. They offer the following 10 recommendations for improving student achievement: (a) understand the difference among achieving schools and declining schools and the use of information by school staffs to re-orient their efforts toward student achievement, (b) set goals in reading and math and make them non-negotiable, (c) increase the emphasis of mastery of basic skills, (d) attend to achievement of minimum level of academic objectives by all students, (e) emphasize the role of the

principal as a director of instruction and evaluator of the schools instructional program and accountable for improvement, (f) use educational assessment and evaluation measures as a means of accountability, (g) emphasize teacher professional development and professional responsibility to educate their students, (h) hold teachers responsible and accountable for student attainment of basic goals, (i) monitor time spent on direct instructional activities that lead to mastery of basic objectives , and (j) define the teachers role as a production oriented job designed to accomplish defined goals. The work of Brookover and Lezzote served and continues to serve as an anchor of effective schools research even while many others have added to effective schools research and produced a variety of findings and recommendations.

In his own ongoing research to prove Coleman wrong and to document that schools can and do make a difference, Edmonds (1982, p. 4) identified five characteristics of an effective school based upon his work with successful schools that had high poverty rates. These five characteristics are: (a) the principal's leadership and attention to the quality of instruction, (b) a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus, (c) an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning, (d) teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery, and (e) the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation. Edmonds concludes that "All of these programs presume that almost all school-age children are educable and that their educability derives from the nature of the schools to which they are sent (p. 10)." This strongly supports the need for awareness of the importance of school culture, which is discussed further in the section below.

Purkey and Smith (1983) argue that culture is the element that distinguishes an academically effective school. The culture of an effective school includes structures, processes and a climate that values and stresses successful teaching and learning for student achievement and success. They further identify two sets of variables that interact in the quest for effective schools. The first set of variables is organizational and structural; the second set of variables is described as process variables. Purkey and Smith's (1983) effective schools organizational and structural variables include: (a) school-site management, (b) instructional leadership, (c) staff stability, (d) curriculum articulation and organization, (e) schoolwide staff development, (f) parental involvement and support, (g) schoolwide recognition of academic success, (h) maximized learning time, and (i) district support. The four process variables are: (a) collaborative planning and collegial relationships, (b) sense of community, (c) clear goals and high expectations, and (d) order and discipline. Individually, the cultural variables, as well as the intersection of these variables, add value to the overall school experience for students and staff. Purkey and Smith's findings emphasize many important factors that further contribute to the understanding of effective schools and the body of effective schools research.

Effective schools research results do not, however, provide direction or steps to create more effective schools (Hannaway & Talbert, 1993). Effective schools research instead sets the stage for future research in areas including instructional leadership, a topic that has gained significant traction in the field of educational leadership. Examination of principal behaviors will add further depth to the effective schools

research and further support of idea of leadership practice and its connection to student achievement.

Direct or Indirect Principal Behaviors Influencing Student Achievement

For many years, there was great debate as to whether principal leadership behaviors made a difference in student achievement outcomes. An understanding of the direct and indirect effects of school principals on student achievement can be obtained through review of relevant literature. In this section, research studies will be presented that support the idea that principal leadership behaviors are fundamental to the success of schools.

In research conducted by Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996), 87 U.S. elementary schools were used to explore the extent of the principals' direct and indirect leadership effects on reading achievement. Their study utilized a multidimensional model to measure principals' effect on student learning. Data gathered from principal and teacher surveys and student test scores, relationships between several context variables, instructional leadership, instructional climate, and reaching achievement were analyzed. Results of the research showed that while there were no evident direct effects of principal instructional leadership on student achievement, there was evidence that the principal can have an indirect impact on student achievement (Hallinger et al., 1996). Student achievement outcomes can be influenced by the actions of the principal upon the climate of the school. In particular, school mission, student opportunity to learn, and teacher expectations for learning can be widely influenced by the principal. Similarly, Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) assert "A number of studies have found that principals in high achieving schools tend to emphasize achievement. This involves setting

instructional goals, developing performance standards for students, and expressing optimism about the ability of students to meet instructional goals” (p. 37). Other research studies support that the perception of the principal as a strong instructional leader promotes student achievement through influencing the components of a positive school-wide learning climate (Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood & Wisenbaker, 1978; Hallinger et al., 1996; Sebring & Bryk, 2000).

In related research on the role of the principal as an instructional leader, Bossert et al. (1982) developed a framework for understanding the principal leadership role. Several critical areas were considered in this work, including instructional organization, school climate, influence on behavior and the context of principal management to make sense of what principals do as instruction managers to impact student achievement. The Bossert et al. (1982) study emphasizes the multifaceted nature of the role of the principal as instructional leader. Additionally, the researchers assert that the school’s social structure and organization are important to consider as are climate and principal leadership styles. These factors can impact the principal as well as overall school success. Finally, very specifically, the study concludes that “principals’ management behavior has both *direct* and *indirect* effects on student learning” (Bossert et al., 1982, p. 54).

Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2013) conducted a study in Texas between the years 1995 to 2001 to measure the impact of effective principals on student achievement. Using data from observations of 7,420 principals and 28,147 annual observations, student achievement data over several years, as well as other indicators, the researchers created effectiveness measures that could be quantified through student achievement. The

researchers were able to conclude that “highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools between two and seven months in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount” (p. 1).

Aligned with direct and indirect leadership behaviors of the principal, the importance of collective efficacy and effort underscores McREL’s Balanced Leadership Framework, in which a purposeful community led by the principal underlies all improvement efforts. Purposeful community is defined as a community “with the collective efficacy and capability to develop and use assets to accomplish purposes and produce outcomes that matter to all community members through agreed-upon processes” (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2005, p. 79). Within the framework of purposeful community, McREL identifies eight leadership responsibilities: (a) affirmation, (b) communication, (c), culture, (d) ideals/beliefs, (e) input, (f) relationships, (g) situational awareness, and (h) visibility. These eight leadership responsibilities require action steps by the principal that can be categorized as direct and indirect leadership behavior.

In their study of improved student learning in schools, Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010), identify Core Leadership Practices and Practices Deemed Helpful by Teachers and Principals that principals and teachers in subject schools identified as purposefully impacting student achievement (see Table 1). These core leadership practices and practices are representative of direct and indirect leadership behaviors that add value to a school and its ability to serve students in an effort to improve achievement. These identified practices indicate that care and attention must be paid to myriad facets of a school, including but not limited to classroom instruction.

Table 1

Core Leadership Practices and Practices Deemed Helpful by Teachers and Principals

Core Leadership Practices	Practices Identified as Instructionally Helpful
Setting directions Building a shared vision Fostering the acceptance of group goals Creating high performance expectations Communicating the direction	-Focusing the school on goals for student achievement -Focusing teachers' attention on goals for student achievement -Focusing teachers' attention on expectations for student achievement -Staying current
Developing people Providing individualized support and consideration Offering intellectual stimulation Modeling appropriate values and practices	-Keeping track of teachers' PD needs -Providing general support/open door -Being easily accessible -Providing backup for teachers for student discipline and with parents -Providing mentoring opportunities for new teachers
Redesigning the organization Building collaborative cultures Modifying organizational structures to nurture collaboration Building productive relations with families and communities Connecting the school to the wider community	-Creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate
Managing the instructional program Staffing the instructional program Monitoring progress of students, teachers and the school Providing instructional support Aligning resources Buffering staff from distractions to their work	-Monitoring teachers' work in the classroom -Providing instructional resources and materials

It is clearly established that principal behaviors, both direct and indirect, can impact student achievement outcomes. The research presented acknowledges the numerous roles of the school principal; in particular it recognizes the importance of instructional leadership, which is discussed in the next section.

Instructional Leadership

In order to facilitate school improvement for the purpose of increased student achievement, principals must demonstrate strong skills in the area of instructional leadership. Strong principal leadership behaviors have been shown through a variety of research to correlate with increased student achievement (Blase & Blase, 1999; Cotton, 2003; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Descriptions of instructional leadership can be found in this section.

In 1989, Smith and Andrews described instructional leadership as having four roles or dimensions: (a) resource provider, (b) instructional resource, (c) communicator, and (d) visible presence. Blase and Blase (1999) established a Reflection-Growth (RG) model that identified the following characteristics of instructional leadership: (a) encouraging and facilitating the study of teaching and learning, (b) facilitating collaborative efforts, (c) establishing coaching relationships among teachers, (d) using instructional research to make decisions, and (e) using principles of adult learning when dealing with teachers. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (1995) establish the following as instructional leadership behaviors: (a) direct assistance teachers in their day-to-day activities, (b) development of collaborative groups among staff, (c) design and procurement of effective staff development activities, (d) curriculum development, and

(e) the use of action research (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005). Research supports that instructional leadership for student achievement involves a vested school community working in concert with the titular leader, the principal.

Looking more specifically at the instructional leadership actions of principals in schools, Cotton (2003) summarized research from 81 studies (post-1985 research) focused on what principals in successful schools do and came up with “26 principal behaviors that contribute to student achievement” (p. ix). These behaviors fall into five categories: (a) *establishing a clear focus on student learning*, including having a vision, clear learning goals, and high expectations for all students, (b) *interactions and relationships* that include communication and interaction, emotional/interpersonal support, visibility and accessibility, and parent/community outreach and involvement, (c) *school culture* which supports shared leadership/decision making, collaboration, support of risk taking, and continuous improvement, and (d) *instruction* that involves discussing instructional issues, observing classrooms and giving feedback, supporting teacher autonomy, and protecting instructional time, and (e) *accountability*, monitoring progress and using student progress data for program improvement (pp. ix-x).

In another study using quantitative research methodology, Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2005) have identified 21 Leadership Responsibilities (in alphabetical order): affirmation, change agent, communication, contingent rewards, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement with curriculum/instruction/assessment, knowledge of curriculum/instruction/assessment, monitor/evaluate, optimize, order, and outreach. The impact of these 21 Leadership Responsibilities are further defined by their effect sizes, which range from .15 for

contingent rewards, which refers to recognizing and rewarding individual accomplishments; to .33 for situational awareness, which means that the school leader is aware of the nuances and undercurrents in the school. Waters et al., (2005) explain that the school leader then can use this information to address current and potential issues and concerns, depending on the current school context and prioritized needs. Instructional leadership behaviors are clearly recognized through the research and literature as being important in schools. Instructional leadership behaviors, however, are only part of the story. The early conception and identification of leadership practices by researchers will add further dimension and depth to the principal/school leadership discussion.

Early References to Leadership Practices

While the critical nature of principal leadership behaviors is firmly established in the research, there are numerous important early references to leadership practices that must be acknowledged. A brief discussion is warranted about each of the following: The Leadership Practice Inventory, distributed leadership practices, and high poverty – high performance research.

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), developed by Kouzes and Posner (2007), based upon their case study research of leaders, includes five areas of leadership practices that are further divided into ten commitments (see Table 2). The LPI provides groundwork toward defining leadership practice as it aligns practices to specific commitments. The commitments within the practices require that the principal engage and interact with others for the benefit of the school community. The LPI acknowledges that principals do not act as isolates. The focus upon interaction and engagement moves

us to the next section and the concept of distributed leadership, which moves further toward leadership practice defined.

Table 2

Leadership Practices Inventory

PRACTICES	COMMITMENTS
Model the Way	Find Your Voice
	Set the Example
Inspire a Shared Vision	Envision the Future
	Enlist Others
Challenge the Process	Search for Opportunities
	Experiment and Take Risks
Enable Other to Act	Foster Collaboration
	Strengthen Others
Encourage Others to Act	Recognize Contributions
	Celebrate Values and Victories

Distributed Leadership Practices

Distributed leadership practices are those that focus attention beyond a single-leader perspective toward the interactions of leaders with and within context, environment and followers (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). The theory of distributed leadership is grounded in activity theory and distributed cognition (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). Diamond explains that activity theory is about the way a system works with regard to a particular activity. There are

numerous contributing factors to any activity that move it beyond a single action.

Distributed cognition requires, according to Diamond, thinking “about how sense making is stretched over social interaction and artifacts in an environment. The context and social system matter” (Retrieved from

<http://www.uknow.gse.harvard.edu/leadership/leadership002a.html>). The amalgamations of these two concepts provide foundation for the conceptual understanding of distributed leadership.

Spillane and Diamond (2007) offer that a distributed perspective of leadership in schools recognizes that leading requires the interaction of leaders, followers and situation. Furthermore, the distributed leadership framework, according to Spillane, et. al (2001), examines how leadership responsibilities and actions are distributed via positional and informal leadership. Beyond the distribution of leadership responsibilities, it is important to investigate the macro and micro activities and tasks that school leaders must attend to in their practice. The analysis of micro tasks - those tasks that are day-to-day work, and macro functions – the larger scale work, is critical to inspecting distributed leadership in schools as well as to understanding the interplay between leaders, followers, and situation. The viewpoint that “three elements—leaders, followers, and situation—in interaction mutually constitute leadership practice” (p. 8) is shared by others (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004) and is foundational to the definition of leadership practice proffered in this thematic dissertation study of leadership practices of principals of successful schools serving ELA learners.

There is a mistaken belief that distributed leadership is “any form of shared, collaborative, or extended leadership practice” (Spillane, 2006, p. 5). A more accurate

understanding is grounded in the idea that distributed leadership emphasizes the actions of the leader in conjunction with the nature of interactions between the leadership practice and further interaction with formal and informal leaders, followers, and situation (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001, 2004). Spillane and Diamond (2001) are clear in their suggestion that “leadership practice is not simply a function of an individual leader’s ability, skill, charisma and cognition. While individual leaders and their attributes do matter in constituting leadership practice, they are not all that matters” (p.27). From a distributed perspective, the investigation of leadership must include the study of purposeful activity in the environment in which it naturally occurs.

From this evolves two aspects to distributed leadership practice —the leader plus aspect and the practice aspect. The leader plus aspect refers to the idea that many individuals are involved in leadership within an organization. These roles, as referenced prior, are both formal and informal. The practice aspect of distributed leadership underscores the interactions of school leaders with others in the organizational situation—“a web of leaders, followers, and their situations that give form to leadership practice” (p. 7). Spillane and Diamond (2007) conclude “these three elements—leaders, followers, and situations—in interaction mutually constitute leadership practice” (p. 8).

From a distributed perspective, the first of these three elements, *leaders* and *leadership* spans across many within an organization who assume leadership roles and responsibilities (Spillane & Diamond, 2007) and can be characterized by types of co-leading: (a) collaborated distribution – leadership work carried out by multiple leaders working together at one time and place, (b) collective distribution – leadership work carried out separately but interdependently, and (c) coordinated distribution – leadership

work carried out in a sequence of steps carried out in logical order following completion of prior steps. Spillane and Diamond (2007) frequently describe this interaction as *stretching*. Followers, the second element, references people who assume both leadership and followership positions and interactions between the positions are multi-directional. For Spillane and Halverson (2007) “followers are a defining element of a leadership practice; in interactions with leaders and aspects of the situation, followers contribute to defining leadership practice” (p. 9). The third element of practice—the situation—makes it more or less difficult to engage in leadership work. Leaders and followers interact with situational characteristics, which can be fluid and changing. Therefore the situation also helps to define distributed practices of leadership.

Spillane and Harris (2008) suggest that the popularity of a distributed perspective of leadership can be attributed to three main causes: normative power, representational power, and empirical power. Normative power refers to the idea that distributed leadership reflects the changes to what leadership practice looks like in schools in current context. Spillane and Harris (2008) submit that the increase and change in the nature of leadership tasks and responsibilities in schools:

Has required leadership to be actively and purposefully distributed within the school. The model of the single, heroic leader is at last being replaced with leadership that is focused upon teams rather than individuals and places a greater emphasis upon teacher, support staff and students as leaders. (p. 31).

The representational power of distributed leadership lies in the alternative approaches to leadership that have emerged because of increased external demands and pressures placed upon schools in recent years. Schools have had to redefine and restructure their

work and their workforce, creating the need for expertise and leadership outside traditional role-boundaries. Finally, distributed leadership has empirical power. The body of research to support distributed leadership as a means to increasing student achievement and impacting positive organizational outcomes in schools is well-established.

This initial description of distributed leadership moves thinking about leadership beyond the concepts of traits, behaviors, principles or commitments. The idea of distributed leadership instead moves understanding toward the idea that leadership practice in schools includes numerous leaders and followers and that leadership practice is not the domain of one particular individual in one particular role. Distributed leadership recognizes that individuals move in and out of leadership and followership roles, and situation and context interact with that movement in ways that can engender or inhibit school leadership. Harris (2010) argues that this construct of a distributed leadership practice provides a framework that is conceptual and analytic in the study of interactions. Gronn (2002) proposes that distributed leadership does not simply include the exchanges and influences of various individuals, but relies on “three forms of concretely patterned and reproduced activity-based conduct, each representing varying degrees of structural solidity: spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practices” (p. 446). Distributed leadership research lays the groundwork for the critical nature of context and interaction in leadership. Research in the area of High Poverty – High Performance (HP-HP) schools furthers the understanding of distributed leadership in educational settings for the purposes of student achievement.

High Poverty–High Performance (HP-HP) Research

Calkins, Genther, Belfore, and Lash (2007) provide research findings that share how a small number of schools which are similar to the lowest performing schools in the country are successfully serving high-poverty student populations. Their findings show that these HP-HP schools exhibit three characteristics. The researchers present these three characteristics and related elements in their Readiness Model for School Turnaround (see Figure 3).

The implications of this work are that in order for schools to be successful in school turnaround or improvement work, they need to assess their readiness for change in three key areas: (a) readiness to learn, (b) readiness to teach, and (c) readiness to act. In the first key area, *readiness to learn*, the three school characteristics deemed necessary for improvement are: (a) safety, discipline, and student engagement - students must feel secure and inspired to learn, (b) schools take action against adversity and directly address their students' poverty-driven deficits, and (c) closer student-adult relationships have to be encouraged and nurtured in order for students to have positive and enduring mentor/teacher relationships. For the second area, *readiness to teach*, the following characteristics must be present: (a) if staff feel a deep accountability and missionary zeal for student achievement, then a shared responsibility for student achievement will be present in that school, (b) when teachers are able to personalize instruction by basing that instruction on both diagnostic assessment and adjusting time on task for learning experiences, and (c) a pervasive professional teaching culture exists where the practice of continuous improvement occurs through collaboration in job-embedded learning. The

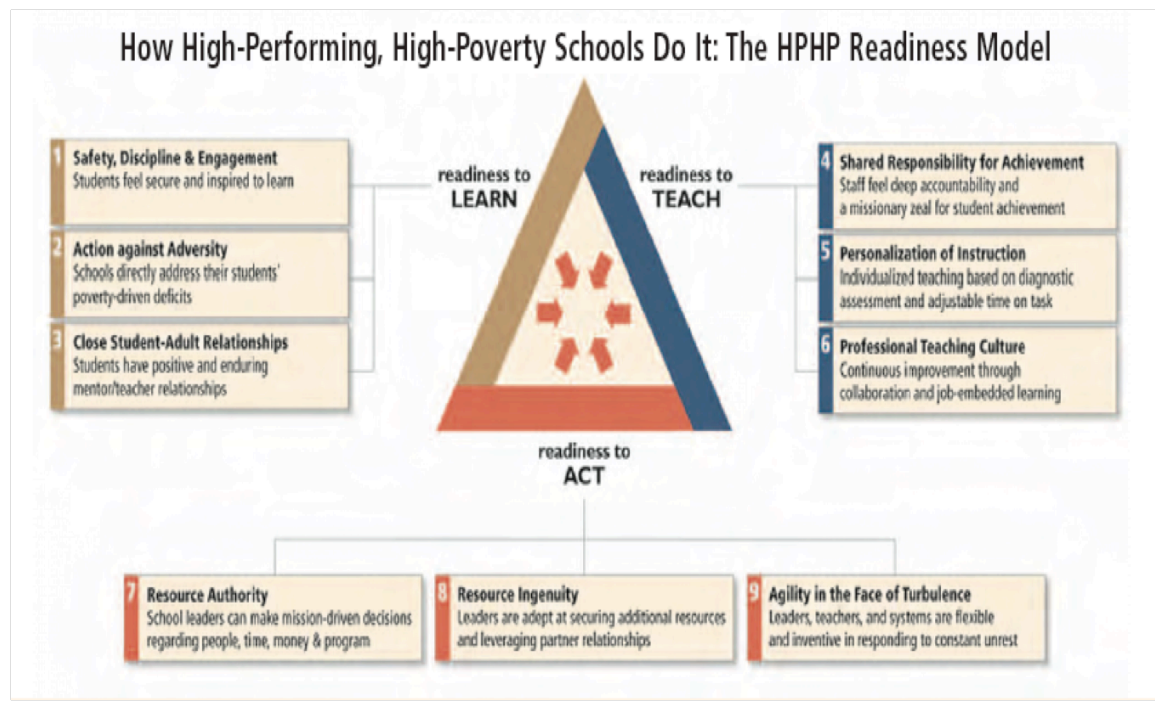


Figure 3. The readiness model for school turnaround efforts.

third key area, *readiness to act*, speaks to an organization's capacity to act in these three areas: (a) resource authority – school leaders can make mission-driving decisions regarding people, time, money, and programs, (b) resource ingenuity – leaders are adept at securing additional resources and leveraging partner relationships and (c) agility in the face of turbulence – leaders, teachers, and systems are flexible and inventive in responding to constant unrest.

This particular body of work on turnaround schools in general and this specific readiness model described and illustrated above was selected for inclusion in this literature review for two reasons. The first is that it is a newer and more advanced version of the school effectiveness research study, but much more nuanced. The second is that it provides and supports the search in this study for an applicable definition of the construct

of a leadership practice. Added to this literature review, a clearer picture emerges of the complex nature of context in which a school leader must work.

Conceptual Frameworks that Support Defining a Leadership Practice

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) define a leadership practice as an interaction between leaders, followers, and situation (see Figure 4). Context is a critical component to understanding leadership practice in that the interface of leaders, followers, and practice is primary, and not ancillary, to leadership practice.

The two conceptual frameworks selected for this study both focus on leadership that is learner-centered, and can be used to further define and contextualize leadership practice beyond those described by Spillane et al. (2004). Spillane's conclusion that "to study leadership practice we need to study leaders in action...our distributed perspective suggests the need for more complex approaches to studying the expertise of leaders" (p. 38) supports the integration of additional conceptual frameworks for the purpose of

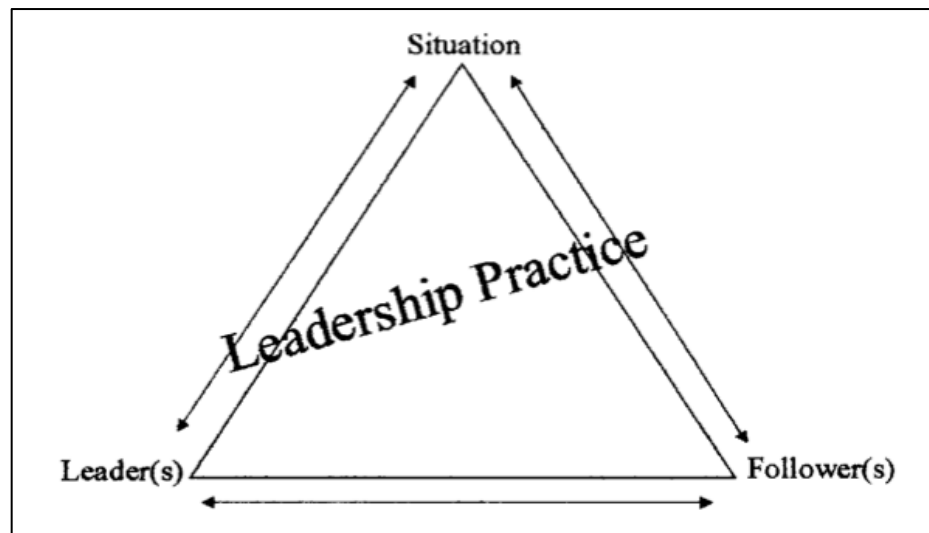


Figure 4. Constituting elements of a leadership practice.

studying principal leadership practices in successful schools serving ELA learners. The two frameworks chosen, the VAL-ED Matrix and the ES-I Framework, have defined

components, processes, supports and indicators respectively that will be useful in defining leadership practice as a construct. Each framework and how they will be used to further define the construct of a leadership practice are discussed in the sections below.

Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED)

One of two specific conceptual frameworks used in this study that examine leadership behaviors that are linked to student outcomes, the VAL-ED is a comprehensive, multi-faceted evaluation and assessment tool. According to Elliott, Murphy, Goldring, and Porter (2009), “The VAL-ED uses 360 degree feedback, from teachers, principals, and supervisors” (p. 5). The VAL-ED was selected for this study because the VAL-ED can support the definition and recognition of what constitutes a principal engaging in a leadership practice. The VAL-ED assessment framework is specifically designed to examine leadership behaviors that impact student achievement. According to Elliott et al. (2009), “the content of the proposed assessment is learning-centered leadership behaviors, behaviors that are related to increases in student achievement. The assessment is of leadership behaviors, not knowledge, dispositions, or personal characteristics of leaders” (p. 5). This framework, which is constructed upon six core components and six key processes, is useful in moving toward definition of effectiveness in the construct of leadership practice.

The principal’s focus in this context is the six core components of the VAL-ED, which include: high standards for student learning, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, culture of learning and professional behavior, connections to external communities, and systemic performance accountability. The definition of leadership practice by Spillane et al. (2004) would require that principals not only focus on these six

components, but that they also engage followers and situational interaction. In concert with focus upon the six core components by the leader is the engagement of stakeholders and interaction of situation in the six key processes defined by VAL-ED: planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring. The VAL-ED Matrix created by the intersection of the six core components and the six key processes provide boundaries for the definition of specific and particularized leadership practices that impact student achievement. The VAL-ED also serves as the basis for the creation of a follow-up interview protocol. The leadership practice interview questions developed for this study will offer further clarity and depth with regard to principal leadership practices in successful schools serving ELA learners. Questions such as “How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving *rigorous curriculum – content* already prevalent in this school?” are designed to align with the VAL-ED results in order to add to the definition of leadership practice constructs (see Appendix B). While the VAL-ED is a strong leadership framework in and of itself, the addition of the ES-I framework adds further depth to the study of principal leadership *in situ*.

Essential Supports – Indicators (ES-I)

Like the VAL-ED, the ES-I Framework developed by Bryk et al. (2010) is constructed upon leadership behaviors that are associated with student outcomes. The ES-I framework is comprised of five essential supports and 14 indicators. The framework was developed as an outcome of research conducted in Chicago Public Schools over

several years that examined results of school reform mandated by the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act.

Bryk et al. (2010) identified supports directly related to leadership that promote school improvement. In the model, these are termed *essential supports*. The ES-I Framework of essential supports includes (a) leadership as the driver for change, (b) parent-community ties, (c) professional capacity, (d) a student-centered learning climate, and (e) instructional guidance (p. 46). Of these five supports, leadership as driver is vital for improvements to occur in the four other essential supports of parent and community ties, professional capacity of faculty and staff, a student-centered learning climate, and an instructional guidance system (p. 197). Without leadership as driver, the framework is weakened and ineffective as is the potential for improvement. Again, leadership as driver requires not only the leader but followers and situation in order to fully understand, define, and implement leadership practice. The 14 indicators defined by Bryk et al. (2010) comprise the five essential supports. The indicators can be ascribed even more readily to stakeholders and other constituencies involved in schools and in the pursuit of student achievement. The 14 indicators are: (a) school leadership, (b) parent involvement, (c) teacher ties to community, (d) professional community, (e) work orientation, (f) teacher background, (g) change in human resources, (h) frequency of professional development (i) quality of professional development (j) academic support and press, (k) safety & order, (l) curriculum alignment, (m) applications emphasis, and (n) basic skills emphasis. The ES-I Framework, like the VAL-ED, also will shape the interview process. These two research-based frameworks will provide meaning and

create opportunity for categorization of behaviors and processes that can be used to define leadership practices of principals in successful schools serving ELA learners.

What Leaders Know about English Language Learners

School leaders understand the added accountability to educate ELA learners not only in core content, but also in the acquisition of English language. The acquisition of English is measured annually in most states. In Colorado, the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) was the state mandated measure for student monitoring and school accountability through 2012. In this context, leadership from the school principal that specifically impacts the achievement of ELA learners is critical to meet state and federal accountability mandates as well as to meet the moral and ethical commitment to educate all students.

Primarily, leadership behaviors that shape the instructional guidance and delivery systems in classrooms will most impact the achievement of ELA learners (Bryk et al., 2010, Lochmiller Huggins & Acker-Hocevar, 2012). Significant support exists in the research for the implementation of a variety of classroom interventions and strategies that are specific to supporting ELA learners. For example, Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2008) provide a model for lesson planning and implementation that provides English learners access to grade-level content standards. Freeman and Freeman (2002) focus on the particular issues of secondary ELA students by organizing curriculum around themes, using predictable classroom routines, and scaffolding instruction. Garcia (1991) outlined a set of effective instructional practices that include organization of learning around themes and the consistent use of collaborative learning. Gay (2000) recommends that teachers develop a knowledge base about the cultures that they serve and that they

provide culturally relevant curriculum to their students. Ladson-Billings (1995) describes the most effective classroom for ELA students as exhibiting pedagogical excellence steeped in cultural relevance. Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik, and Queen (1998) describe successful newcomer programs in secondary schools as providing multiple and flexible learning pathways. Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, and Chu Clewell (2000) suggest the implementation of appropriate assessment techniques and programs that address literacy needs of secondary ELA students. This research underscores the critical nature of the principal's focus on instructional leadership that develops and supports an instructional model that specifically serves ELA learners. Decision-making and leadership structures are also cited in the research as being foundational to supporting the achievement of ELA learners.

Leadership structures and management practices impact how ELA learners are served in schools (Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). Selective placement practices, scheduling structures that allow for extra learning time for students and collaborative work and planning time for teachers (Fullan, 2007; Kostecki & Bers, 2009) are all examples of management practices that support ELA learners. These decisions are indicative of those a leader makes to build a school climate and culture that removes obstacles to productivity and is advantageous to teaching and learning.

Inherent to an efficient and productive school climate and culture is the leadership style of the school principal. Carrejo and Cortez (2010) claim that principals can impact achievement of students by changing their leadership style from supervisory to a more supportive, shared leadership style modeled after communities of practice and transformational leadership. Similarly, Miramontes, Nadeau, and Commins (2011)

advocate that principals leading in ELA learner schools should “shift from the top-down manager to the role of instructional leader in a shared decision making process” (p.142). This shift in leadership philosophy will delegate the power of decision making and help build collaboration and shared leadership throughout a school. The principal will become more effective through influence and modeling, rather than through command and control (Miramontes et al., 2011).

While shared leadership throughout a school community can strongly support ELA learner achievement, the principal emerges as the single person who can most clearly guide toward the long-term success of programming for ELA learners (Reyes, 2006). Principal leadership specifically in the area of social justice is paramount (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). Principal leadership for social justice is described by Theoharis (2007) as:

Principals advocate, lead, and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States. This definition centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools. (p.223)

Further, effective principal leadership in the area of social justice includes the overt promotion of social justice in school, keeping issues concerning equity and access at the forefront of planning and consideration, and implementing inclusive service delivery systems in schools (Theoharis, 2007, as cited in Theoharris 2011). Edmonds (1982) argues “To be effective a school need not bring all students to identical levels of mastery, but it must bring an equal percentage of its highest and lowest social classes to

minimum mastery (p. 4).” While Edmonds is identified as an effective schools researcher, he clearly connects the ideas of effective schools with social justice aims.

In this section, a brief review of the literature about principal leadership specific to ELA learner populations was presented. Three bodies of research were discussed, including instructional leadership to develop an effective classroom instruction model, the importance of decision making and leadership philosophy, and social justice leadership. The next section seeks to move toward a definition of leadership practice in the context of successful schools serving ELA learners.

Definition of Leadership Practice

As the review of literature demonstrates, there is a strong body of work that exists with regard to principal leadership. Research about effective schools, instructional leadership, direct and indirect principal behaviors, leadership practices, distributed leadership practices, and High Poverty – High Performance schools and the readiness model built from that work all add value to examination of what makes a principal a strong leader. The construct of leadership practice supplied by Spillane et al. (2004) that relies upon the interactions of leaders, followers, and situation leads us closer to a definition of leadership practice; however it is lacking the depth of specific and particularized practices in context. The two conceptual frameworks that are used in this study, the VAL-ED Matrix and the ES-I Framework offer research-based, learner-centered components, processes, supports and indicators that have been shown to impact student achievement outcomes. In merging all of this work and in particular through the use of the two conceptual frameworks, a new leadership definition can be created: that of

leadership practice for student achievement, which moves beyond leadership actions, behaviors, and more cursory definitions of leadership practice (see Figure 5).

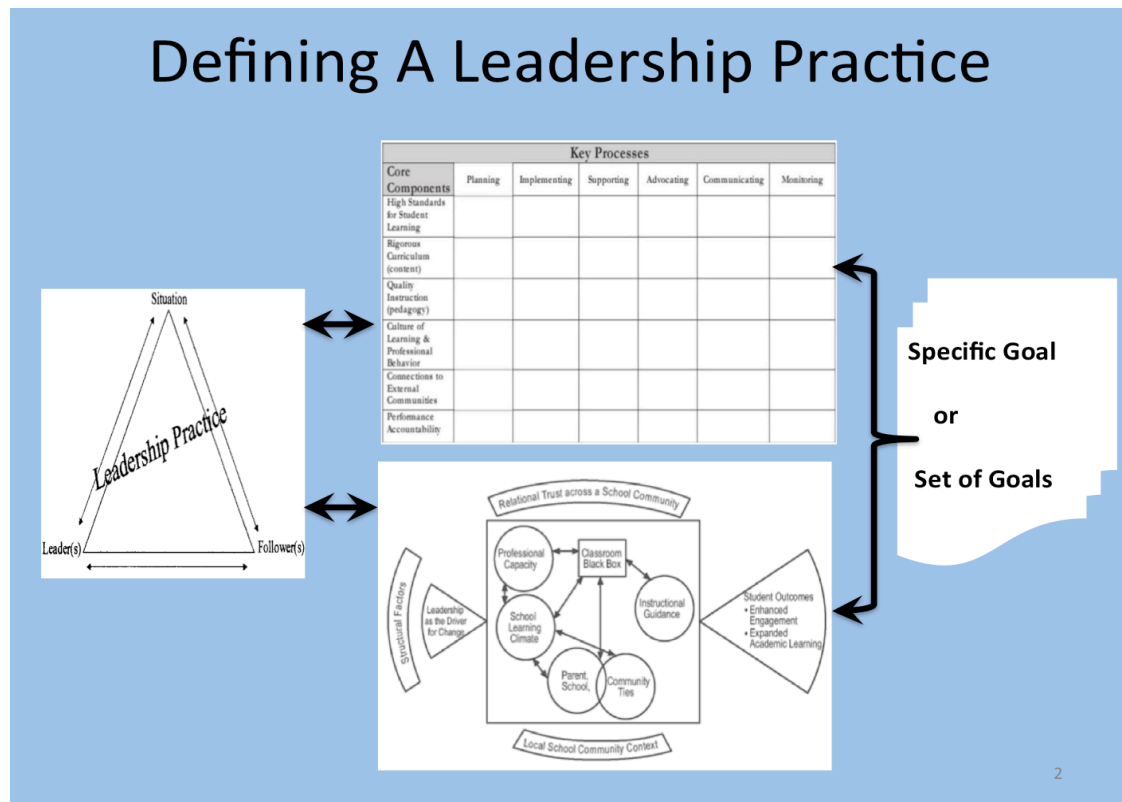


Figure 5. Defining a leadership practice.

Defining a principal leadership practice for student achievement involves the following four specific areas: What the leader does and what they focus on as a principal; the engagement and interaction of the principal with others; the contexts within which the principal exists; and the movement of the principal and the organization toward some goal.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of leadership literature that is foundational to this study. Relevant areas of leadership literature discussed included effective schools research, direct and indirect effects of principal leadership on student achievement, and

instructional leadership. Early references to leadership practice construct were offered, including the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), the readiness model drawn from HP-HP literature, and distributed leadership research. This chapter extended work from Spillane et al. (2004) toward a more robust definition of a leadership practice through the addition of two more conceptual frameworks: the VAL-Ed Matrix and the ES-I Framework, both of which focus upon learner-centered leadership. Additionally, a review of literature with regard to what school leaders know about English Language Learners was presented, along with a brief treatment of the importance of school leadership for social justice. The chapter closed with a discussion of the definition of a leadership practice in the context of this study. The next chapter will explain the research procedures and steps that will be used to identify the specific and particularized leadership practices used by a case study principal who leads a successful school serving ELA learners.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the details of the methodology used in this study to answer the research questions. The first section outlines methods used in this research: case study and narrative inquiry. The second section focuses on research design elements: site selection, subjects, unit of analysis, and the seven stages of this research study. The third section describes the three research instruments used in this study: VAL-ED Survey, Leadership Practices Interview Protocol, and the Narrative Interview Protocol. The following section outlines data collection strategies used for each instrument. Next, data analysis procedures are presented. Data coding inventory development will be explained in the next section. Finally, this chapter ends with an explanation of data triangulation and member checking procedure used for ensuring trustworthiness of data in this study.

Methods

To increase understanding of leadership practices and behaviors of principals in successful schools serving ELA learners, qualitative research methodology was utilized. This study employed two methods of research: case study and narrative inquiry. This study was part of a larger thematic dissertation study in which five researchers employed collaborative techniques in reviewing literature, establishing frameworks, and designing certain common research questions in addition to independently designed research questions.

Case Study

This study employed case study research. According to Merriam (2009), case study is “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 43). In this study, leadership practices of one principal are examined closely through two specific frameworks, including the VAL-ED, and the five essential supports and fourteen indicators required for school improvement (Bryk et al., 2010). Using case study methodology allowed for greater freedom of engagement in qualitative research in that “unlike experimental, survey, or historical research, case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 42).

Case studies feature rich or “thick” description as a foundational element, “Thick description is a term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). The ability to achieve rich or thick description of leadership behaviors and definition of leadership practices are enhanced through the use of interview protocols in this study. The element of story in the study is derived through the interview process and adds depth and context to principal leadership practices and behaviors.

Narrative Inquiry

Webster and Mertova (2007) report that while the use of stories of experience has not often been seen as an inquiry method, but rather as a way to collect data, *narrative inquiry* is set in human experience and human stories and therefore is “well suited to addressing the complexities and subtleties of human experience of teaching and learning” (p. 1) and leading. Bell (2002) also reports that the process of narrative inquiry is based on the assumption that human beings make sense out of their life experiences by telling

stories. Early proponents of narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gough, 1991; Grumet, 1981) argue that narrative inquiry is an important and compelling methodology best suited to uncover what may otherwise be invisible to us, but can be discovered through the use of storytelling methodologies. Webster and Mertova offer that narrative inquiry is becoming a respected research method, particularly in educational research (2007). Additionally, Reissman (2008) cautions that narrative inquiry methodological perspectives “have elusive, contested, and indeterminate borders” (p. 183). The validity or “trustworthiness” of narrative inquiry methodology should be “assessed from within the situated perspectives and traditions that frame it” (p. 185). In this study the situated context is a school, its cultural and academic contexts, and the specific and particularized leadership practices that the principal has put into place over a period of at least three or more years. For these reasons narrative inquiry was selected for use in this study.

Research Design Elements

The research design elements included in this section include site selection, subjects, unit of analysis, and the seven stages of the study. Site selection for this study was from among schools in the Denver Public School System. Subjects are defined for this case study, as is the unit of analysis. Finally, the seven stages of this study are discussed with brief descriptions of each stage.

Site Selection

Of a total of 162 schools in the Denver Public School System, only twenty-two schools met the following five criteria: (a) an open enrollment policy, (b) at least 40% of total enrollment consisting of ELL students, (c) a total School Performance Framework

(SPF) rating greater than 49% for elementary schools, and great than 45% for middle schools and high schools, (d) at least 50% of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch, and (e) have gains on the CSAP and CELA tests for the past three years relative to schools serving the same grade levels. Of the twenty-two schools that met the five criteria, thirteen schools remained when sorted using the parameter of the principal having three or more years of experience at that particular school.

Subjects

The subject of this case study is the principal who was identified as successful and serves a number of ELA learners in the school that they lead. Data sources for the VAL-ED portion of the case study include the principal, the principal's supervisor, and the teachers in the selected school. The principal is the data source for the open-ended interview protocols.

Unit of Analysis

In this study, the unit of analysis is the specific and particularized leadership practices exhibited by the principal. Leadership practice is the construct that resulted from review of the literature and the application to practice of two learner-centered conceptual frameworks. A successful school serving ELA learners provides the context in which the principal engages leadership practices for the benefit of students and the greater school community.

Seven Stages of the Study

There were seven discreet stages to this study.

Stage One—Literature Review: Literature was reviewed to develop an historical review of the literature on learner centered leadership, from effective schools research to

the key conceptual frameworks used in this study, with a specific focus on the emergence of the construct of a leadership practice.

Stage Two—Identifying Schools, Building Tools, and Piloting: A school was identified from the list of successful schools within the Denver Public School District where the principal and the teachers and principal's supervisor are willing to participate in this study. Sample interview protocols were piloted with sitting principals.

Stage Three—Administration of VAL-ED Survey: The school was visited during a portion of a faculty meeting to present the study to the teachers and to share the logistics of the online administration of the VAL-ED survey. Teachers were given a start date and an end date for participation in the survey. Once principal reports were returned from Discovery Education, the higher rated areas on the VAL-ED Matrix for the principal in this study were identified and used to develop the interview protocol instruments used in Stage Four.

Stage Four—Construction and Use of a Leadership Practice Interview Protocol: Based on the areas of strength on the VAL-ED survey, relevant questions from the Leadership Practice Interview Protocol associated with those areas were chosen. This stage resulted in a list of leadership practices being detailed using codes from the Leadership Practice Study Coding Protocol. In addition, the researcher took field notes during the interview using pre-prepared forms that provided for tally options and short notes related to the five essential supports and the fourteen key indicators associated with the ES-I Framework (Bryk et al. 2010) and the VAL-ED Matrix (Goldring et al. 2009).

Stage Five—Narrative Inquiry Protocol: The interview protocol used in Stage Five was much more open-ended and informal, designed to elicit critical life and work

events from the principal, and/or his or her back story of how specific and particularized leadership practices were developed, implemented, improved, and maintained.

Stage Six—Cross-Case Analysis Questions: Since this study is one of five thematic dissertation studies being conducted by the School of Education and Human Development and five of Denver Public Schools successful schools serving ELA learners, there were themes that emerged from these individual dissertations that were examined using data already collected.

Stage Seven—Presentation of Research Findings: At the completion of this work, research findings were included in my dissertation; I will schedule a defense of this work with the UCD Dissertation Committee. After a successful defense and incorporating any requested changes or recommendations, I will schedule a presentation with the appropriate stakeholders from Denver Public Schools.

Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data for this study – the VAL-ED Survey, the Leadership Practice Interview Protocol, and the Narrative Inquiry Protocol. The VAL-ED Survey, which was completed by the principal, the principal’s supervisor, and teachers in the school, was administered. Based upon the results of the VAL-ED Survey, follow-up interviews with directed questions occurred at the school site. The Leadership Practice Interview Protocol was created from the components of the two conceptual frameworks used to guide this study. The interview protocols were constructed to focus on areas in the VAL-ED Matrix in which the principal scored at the proficient or outstanding level. The Narrative Inquiry Protocol was developed to prompt the principal

to share the particular experiences of the personal and professional journey that has led to their current leadership success and development of their successful leadership practices.

VAL-ED Survey

The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) is a research-based evaluation and assessment framework that measures principals' leadership behaviors. By using the VAL-ED to better understand leadership practices in schools showing academic gains with ELA learners, specific leadership profiles and practices can be identified as areas to leverage to better serve schools with ELA learner populations.

The 72-item VAL-ED Survey was taken online and data was compiled and analyzed by Discovery Education Assessment. There are three sources of data: (a) the principal's self-assessment, (b) the assessment of the principal by the supervisor of the principal, and (c) the assessment of the principal by teachers within the building.

Since the VAL-ED Assessment was created from evidence-based research on leadership practices and behaviors that impact student achievement, it helps focus the conversation on a principal's skill set and fit becomes much more focused and specific. Understanding which of the six core components and which of the six key processes are areas of strength or are in need of growth provides pathways for the subject principal as well as the wider field. For the purposes of this case study, it lends itself to further defining the leadership practice construct.

Leadership Practices Interview Protocol

The Leadership Practices Interview Protocol was developed from the VAL-ED Matrix and ES-I frameworks. Questions were created by using each of the six core components of the VAL-ED Matrix cross-referenced with each of the six key processes.

This resulted in 36 questions directly related to the VAL-ED core components and key processes. Questions were also created from the ES-I conceptual framework, and those questions are aligned to the VAL-ED Matrix. Questions used for this protocol depended upon in which categories the principal received proficient and distinguished ratings on the VAL-ED Survey, as the questions asked in the interview protocol were related to those specific categories. See Appendix B for a full list of potential interview questions prior to the results of the VAL-ED Survey.

Narrative Inquiry Protocol

The Narrative Inquiry Protocol used open-ended questions intended to investigate professional and personal events critical to the leaders own personal and professional development across an early, recent, and current time period. Understanding what drives the principal behaviors added to the survey results by uncovering the significant factors that are distinctive to this case study. The result is a rich description and new meaning for the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). See Appendix C for the list of protocol questions.

Data Collection

In this section, the methods for data collection for the three instruments are explained. VAL-ED Survey Data collection required a face to face meeting with all participants to explain the tool and process. The Leadership Practices and Narrative Inquiry Interview Data were collected from personal interviews with the principal after the VAL-ED Survey had been administered and data received by the researcher.

VAL-ED Survey Data

The principal that participated in the study allowed the researcher time to meet with all survey participants during a staff meeting to explain the purpose of the study and

to share the directions for the online survey. Dr. Connie Fulmer distributed the online address to participants so they could access the survey. Individual identification codes and passwords for signing on to the actual instrument to complete the survey were also distributed at that time. A start and end date for administering the survey was communicated. Survey responses were collected online by Discovery Education for analysis purposes.

Leadership Practices Interview Data

Areas in which the principal scores in the proficient and distinguished areas of the VAL-ED Survey was used to determine which questions would be used in the Leadership Practices Interview. All questions to be used were sent to the principal for review prior to the interview. An appointment was scheduled with the principal allowing for a significant block of time to conduct the interview. Results of the VAL-ED Survey were shared, and then the interview commenced with the appropriately aligned questions. Other possible prompts/questions to clarify the principal's responses were asked throughout the interview. With permission from the principal, the interview session was recorded to ensure accuracy in data collection. A Smartpen from Livescribe was used as the instrument that captured the interview data in both writing and oral communication.

Narrative Inquiry Interview Data

Time was then scheduled for the researcher to meet with the principal in order for the principal to respond to open ended questions that were designed to elicit the motivations behind the behaviors that were identified leading to the success of ELA learners. With permission of the principal, the Narrative Inquiry interview was recorded

with Smartpen technology. A follow-up session could have been requested for clarification and/or refinement purposes, however was not.

Data Analysis

The following section will identify the data analysis techniques used for the three types of data collected for this study. In addition, an explanation of the creation and use of the coding inventories is included. Lastly, triangulation and member checking of data is examined to support the validity and reliability of the results.

VAL-ED Survey Data

The VAL-ED reports provided quantitative data from multi-raters with regard to leadership practices and behaviors. Data collected from VAL-ED respondents included mean and median effectiveness scores generated through the six core components and six key processes subscales. The six core components include: (a) high standards for student learning, (b) rigorous curriculum, (c) quality instruction, (d) culture of learning and professional behavior, (e) connections to external communities, and (f) performance accountability. The six key processes include: (a) planning, (b) implementing, (c) supporting, (d) advocating, (e) communicating, and (f) monitoring. A 5-point scale is used with the following value descriptors: (a) 1.00 = ineffective, (b) 2.00 = minimally effective, (c) 3.00 = satisfactorily effective, (d) 4.00 = highly effective, and (e) 5.00 = outstandingly effective.

Analysis of Leadership Practices Interview Data

Data analysis for the interviews included two levels of coding: open coding and axial coding. Interview data was transcribed and loaded into DeDoose, an online platform for analyzing text. Coding inventories created from the ES-I as well as

the alignment of ES-I to VAL-ED were uploaded as well and used to code results of the interview protocol. The transcription was read several times, coding the data where it fit with the VAL-ED and ES-I frameworks. Codes were determined *a priori* from constructs taken from the two conceptual frameworks (six core components, six key processes, the five essential supports, and the fourteen key indicators of school improvement).

When the transcription revealed a category of leadership not identified in the frameworks, a new category was created to allow for emergent codes. During this process, the researcher was looking for additional codes to emerge from these data. The researcher was open to whatever might be present in the data. The process of coding is, according to Merriam (2009), “the way you begin to construct categories” (p. 179). Merriam further explains, “Categories are conceptual elements that ‘cover’ or span many individual examples” (p. 181). The second level of coding that occurred is axial coding, which will group open codes and sharpen the categories. Once all of the data was coded, it was disaggregated to identify findings.

Analysis of Narrative Inquiry Interview Data

Narrative Inquiry interview data were analyzed in a similar manner to the analysis of the Leadership Practices interview data. The data analysis for the Narrative Inquiry interview was not reliant on the established coding inventories, but rather on evolving codes revealed by the principal sharing critical life and work experiences that have informed their leadership in a successful school serving ELA learners.

Coding Inventories

Two coding inventories were used to analyze the Leadership Practices Interview Protocol and the Narrative Inquiry Interview Protocol. The coding inventories are

constructed from the VAL-ED Matrix and ES-I conceptual frameworks and are designed to focus attention upon the specific and particularized leadership practices that are revealed via the data from the interview protocols.

Essential supports and indicators codes (ES-I). The Essential Supports and Indicators Codes were aligned for this study, then segmented and coded for ease of identification. Obvious letter combinations were created for each of the five essential supports and fourteen indicators. The resulting codes are presented in Appendix D. These codes will be applied to appropriate sections of the interview transcripts used to categorize principal responses to both interview protocols.

Essential supports and indicator codes aligned with VAL-ED codes. This coding inventory combines both conceptual frameworks. This set of codes was created by aligning the ES-I codes within the VAL-ED Matrix. For each of the 36 intersections in the VAL-ED matrix, one or more compatible ES-I codes were used to integrate the two coding frameworks. For example, the VAL-ED matrix area of Planning for High Standards is aligned with Instructional Guidance and Curriculum (IG-CA) from the ES-I framework. This coding inventory is found in Appendix E.

Triangulation and Member Checking

Data triangulation establishes the reliability and validity of the data. The VAL-ED survey data, the Leadership Practices Interview Protocol, and the Narrative Inquiry interview protocol are the basis to establish factual accuracy (Kratwohl, 2009). The VAL-ED survey provided data that will point to the principal's leadership strengths. The Leadership Practices Interview allowed the interviewer to focus on specific strengths and allowed the subject principal to elaborate on the VAL-ED survey data that show areas of

strength. The Narrative Inquiry protocol provided data from the perspective of principal as she told the story of her leadership journey through critical foundational experiences and events. Recounted work and life events assist in cross-checking the leadership strengths from the VAL-ED survey and resulting questions used in the Leadership Practices Interview Protocol. This triangulation helped establish understanding of the specific and particularized leadership practices employed by the principal (Krathwohl, 2009).

Summary

This chapter discusses the methodology for this study. Case study and narrative inquiry were identified as the research methods to be used. Research design elements including site selection, subjects, unit of analysis, and the seven stages of this research study were explained. Detail was provided in this chapter as to the three research instruments used in this study: the VAL-ED Survey, the Leadership Practices Interview Protocol, and the Narrative Interview Protocol. Data collection strategies to be used for each instrument were described and data analysis procedures were presented. Data coding inventory development was outlined for the two coding instruments. An explanation of data triangulation and member checking procedure used for ensuring trustworthiness of data in this study ended the chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings derived from the research study investigation leadership practices of principals in successful schools serving ELA learners. Research questions one through five are answered through the use of data derived from the VAL-ED Survey, the Leadership Practice Interview Protocol, and the Narrative Inquiry Protocol. The first section discusses case study demographics of the school and the subject principal. The second section focuses on the Leadership Practices evidence through interview data. The next section will investigate how the identified leadership practices align with the VAL-ED Matrix and the Essential Supports & Indicators Framework (ES-I), which are the key conceptual and evidence-based frameworks used in this study. The fourth section will examine how stories of the subject principal's life and work related critical incidents assist in understanding how their self-identified leadership practices developed and evolved in their particular school and community context. The fifth section of this chapter will provide a cross-case analysis of the research question asking what are the common elements of principals' critical incidents, both work and life related, that contribute to an understanding of how the principals developed, implemented, and maintained these successful leadership practices. Finally, the chapter closes with a section devoted to defining an applied definition of leadership practice based upon data gathered through the case study of the subject principal.

Case Study Demographics

The school selected for this case study, Caroline P. Smith Elementary School, had to meet rigorous selection criteria for inclusion in this study. While there are 162 schools

in Denver Public Schools where this study takes place, only 22 schools initially qualified for participation based upon student growth score and demographic requirements put forth in this study. Eligibility for participation was further limited when the 22 schools were assessed for principal tenure. Because of the nature of the study to identify leadership practices, principal tenure of three or more years was critical to providing a basis to understand if in fact that particular principal's leadership work is impacting student achievement. The resulting pool of schools eligible for participation in the thematic dissertation study was narrowed to nine. Caroline P. Smith Elementary was one of those nine.

Caroline P. Smith Elementary School, built in 1954, is located in the southwest area Denver. The school was named after a dedicated public school teacher who taught in the district from 1916 until her death in the early 1950s. Smith Elementary, as it is commonly known, has seen rapidly changing demographics on a variety of indicators. Since the 2008-2009 school year, Smith has seen overall student population growth of 44.2%, their enrollment increasing from 471 to 679 in 2012 – 2013. In addition to the extraordinary growth, Smith has seen numerous other significant changes to the student population the school serves over the past five years (see Table 3). Among these significant changes, and most relevant to this study, is the increase in numbers of ELA learners at Smith, most of whom are native Spanish speakers. Over the three year period from the 2010- 2011 school year to the 2012 – 2013 school year, the ELA learner population at Smith has increased by 12.3% - from 39.7% of the total population to 52.0% of the total population (numbers and percentages of ELA learners at Smith were not available for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years). Smith Elementary offers a

variety of programs and opportunities to serve a wide range of students. There is a magnet Gifted and Talented program, an Early Childhood Education (ECE) center, after school tutoring partnership with a nationally-recognized tutoring company, as well as clubs and activities such as Girls on the Run! and regular Family Nights.

Table 3
Smith Elementary Demographic Trends 2008 – 2012

School Year	Enrollment	Students Receiving FRL	% FRL	Hispanic	White	African American	American Indian	Multiple Races	%Minority	ELA Students	% ELA	SPED Students	% SPED
2008-09	471	391	83.0	346	70	17	0	0	85.1%	N/A	N/A	36	7.6
2009-10	561	508	90.6	399	107	19	2	0	80.9%	N/A	N/A	51	9.1
2010-11	630	583	92.5	513	56	17	2	6	91.1%	250	39.7%	67	10.6
2011-12	643	600	93.3	531	55	12	4	5	91.4%	335	52.1%	60	9.3
2012-13	679	620	91.3	566	53	19	7	2	92.2%	353	52.0%	64	9.4
% Change from 2008	44.2%	58.6%	8.3 %	63.6%	-24.3%	11.8%	-	-	7.1%	-	-	77.8%	1.8

Note: Data retrieved from Denver Public Schools.

The school is also designated as an Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC) school in Denver Public Schools, which means that principal and teacher compensation is linked to purposeful sharing of effective educational practices in the pursuit of increased student achievement and teacher efficacy. There are 45 licensed staff

at Smith, and 72 total staff. At any given time there are also 10 – 12 student teachers and Denver Teacher Residents (DTRs) who are in pre-service preparation to become licensed teachers.

Ms. Lisa Flores has been principal of Smith Elementary for the past five years, the same time frame during which the school has seen rapid and continuous change. Ms. Flores has faced numerous leadership challenges and opportunities that she has embraced and capitalized upon. Flores has created an environment focused on high-achieving students and high-achieving staff, all while managing a school that has looked markedly different each of the five years of her tenure.

Lisa Flores's notification of her appointment to the principalship of Smith Elementary came on the last day of the 2007 – 2008 school year. With the exception of a few years early in her teaching career, Flores has worked in the same school district in which she is now a principal. She had been serving as assistant principal for five years at a middle school when she was appointed principal of Smith, and had spent her entire career to that point at the middle school level. Moving to an elementary school, while being a new experience for her, also provided her with a new challenge not only in assuming the role of principal, but also in moving to a new level of school that was unfamiliar to her. Flores has embraced both of those larger challenges as well as many more that have faced her throughout her tenure thus far at Smith. Looking at Flores's work as principal at Smith during the past five years provides a window into how this particular principal is able to lead a successful school serving ELA learners even when faced with rapidly changing demographics and demands.

Research Question #1

Using the definition of a leadership practice as a guide (developed in Chapter II), what are the specific and particularized self-identified leadership practices being used by the principal in this study to ensure a positive impact of that school on student growth/achievement.

The first component of a leadership practice is the *interaction* or triangle of the leader, the followers, and the situation (see Figure 5). The work that the leaders and followers identify as the target of their efforts within the situation or context forms the second component or the *work focus* of a leadership practice. The third component involves particular proximal or distal goals or outcomes that are of critical importance to the stakeholders as they engage in their work. In addition to these three components, my work on the interview transcripts identified additional elements (tools or activities) that were fundamental to more achieving those proximal and distal goals. All of these components and elements combine to reveal leadership practices of principals in context.

A Leadership Practice Uncovered

The specific and particularized leadership practice that can be most readily ascribed to Lisa Flores is the intentional and deliberate work she did with teachers and others in her school to develop a climate and culture of trust in her school by empowering teachers, distributing leadership, and maximizing teacher capacity. She achieved these proximal goals by using the following tools and activities: (a) professional development, (b) collaborative teams, (c) a peer observation system, and (d) continuing education for her teachers. These components and additional elements of this leadership practice will

be detailed in the sections below. Quotes drawn from the interview transcript will be used to support this leadership practice finding.

The Leadership Practice Triangle

Looking at the leadership practice triangle for Smith Elementary School, Flores is leader. She works with 45 teachers and licensed staff (followers). There are 72 total staff (staff and teachers) at Smith. Flores works with her teachers in collaborative teams which are detailed in the sections below. The situation or context at Smith, like many urban elementary schools, encompasses a complex milieu. According to Smith's 2012 state October count, 52% of students enrolled are designated English Language Learners, 91.3% of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch, and 92.2% are classified as minority. These demographics individually and collectively are considered challenging by educators and non-educators alike. As such, there are many possible work targets for members of Smith's leadership practice triangle.

Work Focus of the Leadership Practice

Of all those possible work targets, one was most pressing to Flores and needed to be attended to first before any of the others could become targets. According to Flores, *"There wasn't a level of trust here when I came here and so that took a lot of work."* In framing the work to be done, Flores pursued both proximal and distal goals as she set about doing the intentional and deliberate work of developing a culture and climate of trust in her school. Additionally, the work focus of Flores with regard to a specific and particularized leadership practice includes the use of tools and activities (e.g., professional development, team meetings, peer observations and continuing education) to reach those proximal goals (e.g., empowered teachers, distributed leadership, and teacher

capacity) which will then support achievement of distal goals or outcomes related to student achievement (see Table 4).

Table 4

Leadership Practice Logic Model

	WORK FOCUS (Tools/Activities)	PROXIMAL GOALS	DISTAL GOALS
1	Professional Development	Empowered Teachers	Student Achievement
2	Data Team Meetings School Leadership Group Meetings Staff Development Team Meetings Grade Level Team Meetings	Distributed Leadership	Student Achievement
3	Peer Observation System	Teacher Capacity	Student Achievement
4	Continuing Education	Teacher Capacity	ELA Learner Achievement

Tools and Activities Related to the Work Focus

In order to move her staff toward *proximal goals* (e.g., creating empowered teacher leaders, distributed leadership, and teacher capacity), Flores employed specific tools and activities designed to support teachers to these ends. Professional development, teacher leadership teams (data team meetings, school leadership group meetings, staff development team meetings, grade level team meetings), a peer observation system and continuing education were specific tools and activities used by this principal to move teachers toward a higher level of performance and practice.

Professional development. Over a period of several years, Flores used a professional development as a tool, taking small cohorts of teachers, usually three to five

people, to Adaptive Schools Training offered by a nearby school district. The purpose of the training was to provide teachers professional development in the area of leading and facilitating adult learning and collaborative group work. The training was critical in supporting Flores's work of *empowering teachers* (proximal goal) to be leaders at Smith.

~ “*when in their training have they been trained to deliver anything to adult learners? They know nothing about protocols, they know nothing about the dynamics of adult learners so I sent my teachers to that Adaptive Schools training.*”

~ *[Now] they take the protocols from Adaptive Schools times 10, they'll twist them up, shake them up, it's always just the most collaborative, awesome table work”*

The professional development in this area also directly supported the activity of teacher leadership teams designed to serve in a variety of capacities at Smith. The number and variety of collaborative teams that exist at Smith demand that there be numerous teachers prepared to take on those roles and responsibilities of teacher leader and facilitator. These teacher leadership teams include the following: data team meetings, school leadership team meetings, staff development team meetings, and grade level team meetings. Additionally, team meetings at Smith promote and engender *distributed leadership* (proximal goal) among teachers.

Teacher-leadership teams. Once Flores realized success in empowering teachers, she was able leverage her influence by using similar tools/activities to develop collaborative teams. Her commitment to creating a culture of *teacher capacity* (proximal goal) and efficacy is evident through the development and structure of these teams.

~ *“I have teacher leaders that facilitate data team meetings.”*

~ *“teacher leaders that facilitate grade-level team meetings.”*

~ *“[the] school leadership team is facilitated by a teacher leader.”*

At Smith, Flores created and used the following tools: collaborative school team meetings, school leadership team meetings, data team meetings, staff development team meetings, and grade level team meetings to the following ends.

School leadership team meetings. The school leadership team at Smith meets each Monday morning. This team, which began with five teachers when Flores began at Smith, has now grown to a team of 22 teachers who share in the responsibilities of leading the school.

~ *“I have a leadership team of 22 people. I started with five.”*

There is one teacher leader designated as facilitator, and this teacher meets with Flores each Wednesday to debrief the prior meeting and plan the agenda for the following meeting. The school leadership team focuses their time and energy on issues of school-wide and community interest. This focus of this team is broader based in its focus, serving as an umbrella over more specific and detailed work.

Data-team meetings. The participation of teachers with regard to sharing their classroom achievement data increased steadily over time as Flores focused on the culture of the school. Data teams initially met and teachers were not forthcoming in sharing data, particularly if it showed students were not meeting particular achievement goals. Flores, likening the process to taking *“intentional baby steps,”* started the conversations about data at a broad level, and had teachers looking at grade level data rather than individual classroom data. Eventually, once teams became comfortable with the grade

level data analysis and the planning that resulted, they were able to move toward examining sample data from their own classrooms.

Flores directed the teachers to choose a sample population of six students from their class. There was no preference or value placed upon which type of population data should be brought to the team. Some teachers brought student data that demonstrated proficiency, some brought student data that fell in unsatisfactory ranges. Flores says teachers moved to the point where they could comfortably say the following to their colleagues –

~ “I did my best, I had them in a small group, I did this, and I did this, and I did this, and I did my best teaching and guess what – it didn’t work.”

The focus of the data teams remained on student achievement and problem solving as the teachers looked at pre and post assessment data. Asking for help was encouraged, and teachers began to embrace the interaction.

Staff-development team meetings. In her use of this tool, two teacher leaders are tasked with facilitating staff development team meetings, which are co-planned with Flores. Staff development team meetings typically take place each Tuesday, and are focused on timely and important topics. Currently, the team is working on Common Core and helping teachers to understand the shifts from what they have been used to toward what they should be planning for and what to expect with implementation of Common Core.

~ “I would love to say that they [these meetings] take a lot of my time anymore but they really don’t. They [the teachers] are just masterful. They could lead adult learning in their sleep.”

The staff development team meetings also utilize book study formats to accomplish new learning for teachers. Flores is very proud of the work of the teacher leaders and the teams that they lead.

Grade-level team meetings. Grade level team meetings at Smith are designed to ensure guaranteed and viable curriculum throughout every classroom. A fifth grader in one room will receive the same content and curriculum as a fifth grade student in another room. Further, in these meetings, teachers look at student work to align expectations for student performance.

~ *“We’re really having a common understanding of what proficient looks like at each grade level.”*

Grade level team meetings also encompass vertical grade level team meetings, in which teachers share and discuss the continuum of curriculum and student work from grade level to grade level.

~ *“I think a second grade teacher should know what a first grade proficient looks like, should know what a third grade proficient looks like. We need to know where they’ve been and where they’re on their way to.”*

Additionally, these grade level team meetings serve to support common language among teachers with regard to key content and conceptual understandings designed to scaffold and support student learning and comprehension from grade to grade.

~ *“We need to know then the instructional verbage that we’re using.”*

~ *“I get really upset when someone’s going to call a topic sentence a controlling statement and they’re talking about the same thing. Don’t confuse my kids.”*

The findings and supporting quotes listed above make clear that this principal's use of team meeting tools (e.g., school leadership team meetings, data team meetings, staff development team meetings, grade level meetings) were embraced by her teachers to yield the positive school results that caused this school to fall into the population of successful schools serving ELA learners that were selected to be part of this study

Peer observation. Another major tool used by Flores to move her school toward achieving proximal and distal goals was born out of the teacher evaluation process piloted by Denver Public Schools—LEAP). At Smith, the peer observation process is implemented school wide and requires teachers to go into one another's classrooms to look for particular indicators of effective instruction.

~ *“we spent a lot of time diving into that framework – what does that look like in a classroom?”*

~ *“we spent a lot of time calibrating just as a community ourselves as to what effective checks for understanding would look like?”*

~ *“ what does effective questioning look like?”*

~ *“ what does an effective content objective/language objective look like?”*

Lessons are then scripted and ratings are given for the purpose of engaging all teachers in progress monitoring school instructional goals Flores reports that the peer observation system produced strong results.

~ *“[the peer observation system has been a wonderful tool for us and it just came naturally then, that there would be such a focus on instruction or quality instruction.”*

Instead of making teachers feel vulnerable or creating divisiveness, the peer observation process has been highly beneficial to the school.

Continuing education. Another major tool used by Flores to help her teachers was one of continuing education for her teachers. Given the large number of ELA learners at Smith, Flores made it a priority for continuing education directly related to serving this population of students.

~ “All of our teachers here are or are in school to become ELA certified and so that[’s] formal training of using those instructional strategies and I require that at this school.”

She expects all of her teachers to be endorsed as ELA teachers or to receive that credential or certificate within two years of being employed at Smith.

Proximal Goals of the Leadership Practice

The intentional focus by Flores on school culture, school climate, and trust building among staff resulted in several proximal goals being developed and met over time. As noted in Table 4 above and discussed in the sections below, empowered teachers, collaborative teams, and a culture of teacher capacity all serve as proximal goals of Flores’s leadership practice.

Empowered teachers. This proximal goal, empowered teachers, is achieved by teachers at Smith very visibly through the variety of leadership opportunities that exist and are identified above. The Adaptive Schools Training professional development supported the ability of teachers to take on the roles required of them in these structures. Data team meetings, grade level team meetings, the 22-member school leadership team and the collaborative school committee are all driven by and dependent upon empowered

teacher leaders. Not only do these groups drive important work being done throughout the school, they drive passion for the craft of teaching.

~ *“they get together and they plan, they talk school talk so much.”*

~ *“Talking about how to improve, how they could better structure their teams, how they could provide better interventions, more differentiation...just constantly.”*

~ *“they’re so passionately excited.”*

In addition to the visible empowerment of teachers through leadership team structures at Smith, Flores is very clear in her intellectual belief, as a principal, of the power of teachers to impact students most directly.

~ *“I do believe in teachers, and I believe that they can make the largest impact on kids, no question. And what I want to do is get rid of road blocks and support them so they can do their magic. By saying that and backing that up with my actions, I think that we began to believe it. And it’s such a strong component, too, for people to know that you believe in them. It’s very, very powerful.”*

She is adamant in her positive support of teachers and her belief that all teachers in her building can be highly effective. Even when a teacher is struggling in his/her practice, Flores believes that in most cases she can move the teacher along through whatever difficulties they are having and support them in improving, while not compromising on her high expectations for performance.

~ *“If I can begin to build just the tiniest bits of success, I have found that has often sparked a lot of really great things.”*

~ *“I make that connection and allow people to grow at their own rate and I’m ok with that, as long as we’re growing.”*

~ *“that whole idea of pushing people, guiding people, nudging people around me to grow and become better and believe in themselves as much as I believe in them.”*

Teachers in Flores’s school share these high expectations of themselves and their colleagues. When asked about poor performance indicators that might arise in this empowered culture, Flores shared the following.

~ *“Because really you’re developing a climate and culture that would siphon anything out that doesn’t compliment it, right?”*

The empowerment of teachers is a proximal goal that supports and results in a stronger climate of trust and culture of capacity that also allows teachers to be able to depend on one another to be professionals (and not have to compete with each other) and hold the same ultimate goal: student achievement.

Distributed leadership. Another powerful proximal goal used by Flores is the strategic use of distributed leadership as demonstrated through the variety of collaborative teacher leadership groups that exist at Smith. Flores wants the people and systems around her to move to a place of independence from her as leader to a place of interdependency upon one another as leaders. Flores asserts over and over again her pleasure in seeing teacher leadership driving the work at Smith through teacher leadership teams.

~ *“What I love now is that I am there as a learner and a participant.”*

~ “*their proficiency level is through the roof. They could actually probably tell me a thing or two.*”

~ “*I realize honestly, especially this year, that it really is sustainable, it could go on without me...so I get excited about that.*”

Distributed leadership has become such an important part of the fabric of Smith that Flores and her school staff are recipients of a grant specific to distributed leadership that entitles them to access a multi-million dollar pot of money to continue to support and develop distributed leadership in the school.

Teacher capacity. The next proximal goal use by this principal is teacher capacity, which can be found in the use of the peer observation system and shared high expectations. Flores expects staff to engage in serious consideration of the instructional practice of their colleagues and allows teachers to elevate the meaningfulness of their collaboration and take more ownership of the collective efficacy of the school and the instructional program.

~ “*More and more I hear teachers calling teachers on it in a nice way, and now you realize that your culture is strong.*”

The proximal goal of developing *teacher capacity* at Smith is most evident in the success the school has seen with the ELA learner population. When discussing her leadership, Flores does not differentiate between her work on behalf of ELA learners and non-ELA learners.

~ “*Everything I do and that we talk about and that we focus on really is in the best interest of all kids.*”

When questioned specifically about ELA learners, there are, however, practices and expectations in place at Smith that are designed to provide maximum benefit to this particular learner group. The requirement of teacher endorsement in ELA instruction broadens the ability of all members of the school community to engage in serving all students, regardless of student language background.

Beginning with the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at Smith for neighborhood three and four year olds, students who are non-native English speakers are taught in Spanish. This is the same structure employed in kindergarten, first and second grades. Over time throughout a school year, there is deliberate introduction of English, facilitated early on through routines and rituals such as daily calendar time in which the students participate. Ideally, if a student is at Smith beginning with the ECE program, by the end of second grade, the majority of their instruction is in English. A modified and accelerated version of this model occurs in older grades.

Flores believes ELA learners at Smith are able to make strong progress because they are still receiving content instruction in their native language while simultaneously learning English. These are two very distinct and separate processes that are eventually joined into one when students are at a point where they are able to receive and comprehend content instruction when delivered in English. Not only does this approach honor the language, it ensures, according to Flores that in her school –

~ “*no one’s going to miss any sort of access to content.*”

Focusing on teacher capacity through continuing education allows Flores to have a higher level of confidence in the instructional abilities of her whole teaching staff, not just a couple of teachers specifically.

The discussion of proximal goals used by Flores in her leadership practice (empowered teachers, collaborative teams, climate of trust, and culture of teacher capacity) provides evidence of the complexity of a leadership practice and how these components when applied in context produce strong results in student achievement.

Distal Goals or Outcomes of the Leadership Practice

Ultimately, the distal goal or outcome of the leadership practice of a principal should be student achievement. How can the work of the principal and the school best support student academic achievement? Of course, there are other very important goals that should exist in schools around student social/emotional development, safety, and personal responsibility, to name a few. Academic achievement, however, is the gold standard measure of how well a student is prepared to move on to subsequent levels of schooling and eventual job opportunities and careers – really, whatever they may encounter in their short and long term future.

At Smith, the outcomes of Flores’s leadership practice (and use of important proximal goals) have impacted the students directly through improved student growth, a measure that takes into account educational value added from year to year by individual students. The three proximal goals (empowered teachers, distributed leadership, and teacher capacity) seemed to work in concert to produce strong student achievement. Emerging from the tools and activities that produced them, these proximal goals served to increase agency and efficacy in achieving gains in student achievement and growth.

With these proximal goals in place, and in the time since Flores assumed the helm of Smith, student growth on measures such as the state assessment program have remained solidly above the state median in almost all areas. In particular, growth of ELA

learners as evidenced by median growth percentiles on state tests exceeds non-ELA learners at Smith (see Table 5).

Table 5

Smith Elementary School 3-year Growth Data 2010 - 2012

	Math	Reading	Writing	Math ELA/non	Reading ELA/non	Writing ELA/non
2010	56	48	47	69/41	58/46	54/38
2011	62	50	53	63/60	45/52	54/51
2012	68	56	47	73/55	56/55	56/38

Note: Data retrieved from Colorado Department of Education.

Throughout both of her interviews, Flores repeatedly underscores the importance of her ongoing work in building a climate and culture of trust at Smith as being foundational to student achievement.

~ *“The climate and culture, the culture of trust...is something that slowly evolved.”*

~ *“Because really you’re developing a climate and culture...”*

~ *“that’s why we’re all here. To reach the kids and make an impact...”*

Research Question 1 above requires a parsing of Flores’s leadership practice into understandable segments—a work focus, tools and activities, proximal and distal goals (or outcomes)—and helps provide for understanding of the complex level of interactions involved in this leadership practice.

Research Question #2

How do the identified successful leadership practices align with key conceptual and evidence-based frameworks (VAL-ED Matrix and the Essential Supports & Indicators Framework) used in this study?

Analysis of the results of the VAL-ED survey shows that Flores is generally quite strong in the areas measured by this assessment. In particular, three areas of overall strength emerged (see Table 6). The survey results of the school staff, the principal and the principal's supervisor indicate that the principal has distinguished ratings on the VAL-ED Matrix core components of **High Standards for Student Learning** ($M = 4.02, n = 40$), **Quality Instruction** ($M = 4.11, n = 40$) and **Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior** ($M = 4.34, n = 40$). All other core components received proficient ratings: Rigorous Curriculum ($M = 3.73, n = 40$), Connections to External Communities ($M = 3.77, n = 40$) and Performance Accountability ($M = 3.72, n = 40$).

Reviewing the data for the key processes (also see Table 6) Flores garnered distinguished ratings for **Supporting** ($M = 4.14, n = 40$) and **Communicating** ($M = 4.02, n = 40$). All other key processes, Planning ($M = 3.92, n = 40$), Implementing ($M = 3.98, n = 40$), Advocating ($M = 3.79, n = 40$), and Monitoring ($M = 3.96, n = 40$) are rated as proficient. The overall effectiveness score for Flores, $M=3.96$, indicates an overall effectiveness rating of proficient, with a percentile rank of 83.

Disaggregating the survey results by respondent group, Principal (P), Teacher (T), and Supervisor (S), a more detailed perspective of the principal emerges. There is variability in which respondent group scored any particular component or key process higher or lower. For example, in the core component of Rigorous Curriculum the

Table 6

Summary of VAL-ED Core Components and Key Processes Scores

SUMMARY OF CORE COMPONENT SCORES				SUMMARY OF KEY PROCESSES SCORES			
	Mean	Performance Level	%-tile Rank		Mean	Performance Level	%-tile Rank
High Standards for Student Learning	4.02	Distinguished	82	Planning	3.92	Proficient	80
Rigorous Curriculum	3.73	Proficient	67	Implementing	3.98	Proficient	84
Quality Instruction	4.11	Distinguished	83	Supporting	4.14	Distinguished	85
Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior	4.34	Distinguished	93	Advocating	3.79	Proficient	75
Connections to External Communities	3.77	Proficient	78	Communicating	4.02	Distinguished	84
Performance Accountability	3.72	Proficient	74	Monitoring	3.96	Proficient	83

principal ($M = 3.50$, $n = 1$) scored herself lower than teachers ($M = 4.13$, $n = 38$) and her supervisor ($M = 3.55$, $n = 1$). In the core component of Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior the principal ($M = 4.75$, $n = 1$) rated herself higher than either teachers ($M = 4.27$, $n = 38$) or her supervisor ($M = 4.00$, $n = 1$). Generally, however, the mean scores of the teachers were the highest of the three groups (see Table 7).

Tables 6 and 7 present the mean effectiveness scores of Flores in the core components and key processes of the VAL-ED. Overall, her scores are very solid throughout the areas measured. Flores is rated proficient or distinguished throughout the matrix of 36 total intersections of core components and key processes. Additionally, the scores, when disaggregated by respondent groups (teachers, principal, and principal's

Table 7

Mean Effectiveness of Core Components and Key Processes by Respondent Group

Total Effectiveness	Principal	3.92	Total Effectiveness	Principal	3.92
	Teacher	4.17		Teacher	4.17
	Supervisor	3.80		Supervisor	3.80
High Standards for Student Learning	Principal	4.00	Planning	Principal	4.00
	Teacher	4.24		Teacher	4.11
	Supervisor	3.83		Supervisor	3.64
Rigorous Curriculum	Principal	3.50	Implementing	Principal	4.00
	Teacher	4.13		Teacher	4.20
	Supervisor	3.55		Supervisor	3.75
Quality Instruction	Principal	4.08	Supporting	Principal	4.17
	Teacher	4.26		Teacher	4.27
	Supervisor	4.00		Supervisor	4.00
Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior	Principal	4.75	Advocating	Principal	3.67
	Teacher	4.27		Teacher	4.03
	Supervisor	4.00		Supervisor	3.67
Connections to External Communities	Principal	3.67	Communicating	Principal	3.83
	Teacher	3.99		Teacher	4.24
	Supervisor	3.67		Supervisor	4.00
Performance Accountability	Principal	3.50	Monitoring	Principal	3.83
	Teacher	4.05		Teacher	4.17
	Supervisor	3.63		Supervisor	3.89

supervisor) still support the aggregated results. There is not one respondent group driving the data in any particular direction.

Based on the scores of the principal's assessment, specific research questions from the three highest core component areas (e.g., *High Standards for Student Learning*, *Quality Instruction*, and *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*) and the two highest key process areas (e.g., *Supporting* and *Communicating*) were selected to be used.

Table 8

Essential Support (ES) and Indicator (I) Code Frequencies (n) Resulting from Transcript Analysis

ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS (ES) – INDICATORS (I)	ES (n)	I (n)	ES-I (n)
School Leadership – Instructional Leadership	SL (27)	I/IL (18)	SL-I/IL (18)
Parent-Community-School Ties – Teacher’s Ties to the Community	PCST (7)	TtC (2)	PCST-TtC (3)
Parent-Community-School Ties – Parent Involvement	PCST (7)	PI (3)	PCST-PI (5)
Professional Capacity – Teacher Background	PC (35)	TB (6)	PC-TB (5)
Professional Capacity – Frequency of Professional Development	PC (35)	FPD (6)	PC-FPD (6)
Professional Capacity – Quality of Professional Development	PC (35)	QPD (8)	PC-QPD (8)
Professional Capacity – Changes in Human Resources	PC (35)	CHR (3)	PC-CHR (3)
Professional Capacity – Work Orientation	PC (35)	WO (16)	PC-WO (15)
Professional Capacity – Professional Community	PC (35)	PC (26)	PC-PC (29)
Student Centered Learning Climate – Safety and Order	SCLC (21)	S&O (10)	SCLC-S&O (14)
Student Centered Learning Climate – Academic Support and Press	SCLC (21)	AS&P (17)	SCLC-AS&P (14)
Instructional Guidance – Curriculum Alignment	IG (9)	CA (8)	IG-CA (11)
Instructional Guidance – Basic Skills	IG (9)	BS (2)	IG-BS (3)
Instructional Guidance - Application Emphasis	IG (9)	AE (5)	IG-AE (13)

in the Leadership Practice Interview. These are areas in which Flores received distinguished ratings. Transcriptions of the interviews were coded in Dodoose and Table 8

Table 9

Core Components and Key Processes Code Frequencies (n) Resulting from Transcript Analysis

VAL-ED CODES	KEY PROCESSES					
CORE COMPONENTS	Plan	Implement	Support	Advocate	Communicate	Monitor
High Standards	HS-P (4)	HS-I (6)	HS-S (4)	HS-A (5)	HS-C (4)	HS-M (5)
Rigorous Curriculum	RC-P (3)	RC-I (4)	RC-S (3)	RC-A (2)	RC-C (4)	RC-M (2)
Quality Instruction	QI-P (9)	QI-I (11)	QI-S (8)	QI-A (6)	QI-C (7)	QI-M (9)
Culture of Learning/ Professional Behavior	CLPB-P (8)	CLPB-I (12)	CLPB-S (19)	CLPB-A (9)	CLPB-C (13)	CLPB-M (5)
Connection to External Communities	CEC-P (4)	CEC-I (10)	CEC-S (5)	CEC-A (6)	CEC-C (9)	CEC-M (1)
Performance Accountability	PA-P (5)	PA-I (3)	PA-S (6)	PA-A (2)	PA-C (8)	PA-M (8)

shows frequency counts of how components of the leadership practice (tools, activities, proximal and distal goals) aligned with the essential supports and the indicators of the ES-I Framework. Table 9 shows the frequency counts of how the transcripts were coded with the core components and key processes of the VAL-ED matrix.

Tables 8 and 9 present the frequencies of occurrence of the codes applied to the transcripts of Leadership Practice Interview, and any applicable portions of the Narrative

Inquiry Interview that revealed relevant data. Table 8, the *Essential Support (ES) and Indicator (I) Code Frequencies (n) Resulting from Transcript Analysis*, reveals high frequencies of the essential supports School Leadership (SL), Professional Capacity (PC) and Student Centered Learning Climate (SCLC). Indicators with high frequencies include Work Orientation (WO), Professional Community (PC), Academic Support and Press (AS&P), and Application Emphasis (AE). Co-occurrence of codes is also represented in Table 8.

Table 9, *Core Components and Key Processes Code Frequencies (n) Resulting from Transcript Analysis*, presents the intersection of code frequencies of the core components and key processes of VAL-ED. Quality Instruction and Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior are strongly represented through frequency of code appearance in the data derived from Flores's interviews.

The data contained in Tables 8 and 9, while important to this study, must be considered in context. The scope and depth of interview data was necessarily restricted due to limited time and access to the subject principal. Thus, the frequencies of codes appearing in the transcripts must be considered as proportional to the whole, rather than in isolation. Had more time existed for interviews, the likelihood is that applicable codes would have appeared with even more frequency in the data. Also interesting to note in these tables is that each code category was represented in the transcripts of the interviews, even though the interview questions used to gather data specific to Flores's areas in which she was designated as 'distinguished' on the results of the VAL-ED Survey. The distribution of codes as evidence of leadership across all of the core components and key processes of the VAL-ED Matrix and throughout the ES-I

framework of Essential Supports and Indicators indicates that Flores's leadership is built upon a strong foundation with particular areas of leadership being even more remarkable.

The data from the VAL-ED Survey, the Leadership Practice Interview, and applicable portions of the Narrative Inquiry Interview provide robust evidence of Flores's identified leadership practice: the intentional and deliberate work she did with teachers and others in her school to develop a climate and culture of trust in her school by empowering teachers, distributing leadership, and maximizing teacher capacity. The VAL-ED Survey mean score ($M = 4.34$, $n = 40$) for the area of Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior provide concrete empirical evidence to support the recognition of her deliberate work in this area at Smith. The data derived from the interviews further supports the intention behind the work, which is a critical component of leadership practice. The frequency of codes related to School Leadership, Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior, and Professional Capacity are demonstrative of the Flores's powerful leadership being grounded in purpose and resolve on behalf of all members of the Smith community.

The answers in the paragraphs above for Research Question 2 illustrate the empirical results of the VAL-ED Survey taken by Flores, members of her staff, and her supervisor. Code frequencies related to the Core Components and Key Processes of the VAL-ED Matrix are reported using transcripts of the Leadership Practice Interview and portions of the Narrative Inquiry Interview. Code Frequencies are also reported related to the interviews with regard to the ES-I framework of Essential Supports and Indicators. Put quite simply the answer is yes, there is alignment between these measures and Flores's leadership practice, *the intentional and deliberate work she did with teachers*

and others in her school to develop a climate and culture of trust in her school by empowering teachers, distributing leadership, and maximizing teacher capacity, as is demonstrated through the above described measures.

Research Question #3

How do stories of this principal's critical incidents (both work and life related) contribute to an understanding of how self-identified leadership practices emerged and flourished within this particular school and community context?

During the Narrative Inquiry Interview, Lisa Flores shared stories and vignettes about her life experiences that she feels contribute to her success as a principal. Many of these stories are intertwined between her work experiences and her life experiences outside of work. This section attempts to categorize critical incidents Flores shares into work-related and life-related categories in order to bring further understanding to how these critical incidents contribute to an understanding of how Flores's leadership practices emerged and flourished within this particular school and community context.

Work Related Critical Incidents

The story of Flores's interview for her first teaching position illustrates an example of principal leadership that Flores emulates – belief in teachers and what they can accomplish. Upon entering the interview, Flores realized that the hiring principal was the same man who had been her own principal as a junior high school student. This caused her consternation because this same principal had, in her words, “*suspended me a few times.*” After going through the interview process without either of them acknowledging they recognized the other, the principal escorted her to the door and said “*You know what? I know exactly who you are, Lisa. I finally got it about ten minutes*

ago.” Flores felt there was no way she would ever get the position after he recognized her. Much to her immediate surprise and her lasting gratitude, the principal followed up with a phone call when Flores arrived home. His message to her “*I have to see what Lisa grew up to be*” and his offer of a job conveyed to Flores the importance of believing not only in teachers but in the potential of students as well.

Early in her career, Flores spent one year teaching in a school in Baltimore, Maryland. All of the students in the school qualified for free and reduced lunch, and all of the students were designated minority (even though Flores in fact was the minority). According to Flores, “*I was reminded every single day I was white, in that I was the only white person in the entire building.*” Instead of this fact being a source of discomfort or unease for Flores, it was something she embraced “*So it was a really neat experience there, really neat, High poverty, total high poverty, makes this school look like we’re rich.*” After her experience in Baltimore, Flores made a conscious decision to always teach or be a leader in a highly impacted school. These settings are where she feels most effective, and most skillful in her work.

Flores’s experiences with purposeful school leadership began when she was a middle school English teacher and assumed a variety of formal and informal leadership roles. Informally, she was elevated to teacher leader by her colleagues in the area of classroom management. Known for having well-run classrooms free from student discipline issues, her fellow teachers frequently sought her advice, or even used her to intervene on their behalf. Flores recounts “*I was the master of classroom management...my peers sent them all to me so they wouldn’t have to answer to administration.*” Formally, she was recruited by her assistant principal to serve as a

Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) in the main office, providing support to teachers in a variety of ways. *“I was really working to help and coach teachers around that management piece and with their instruction so we could engage students.”* Although Flores maintains she *“had every intention of going back to the classroom”* she did not, and in fact she went on to get her endorsement in school counseling and then her principal license.

Once Flores obtained her principal license, she accepted an assistant principal position at a middle school, a position she stayed in for five years, even though she considered it to be anything but rewarding. Her desire to be a true school leader was thwarted in this role, working for that particular principal.

I don’t even know that I could have been called a leader to tell the truth....also, not being able to share in a vision or a big picture – I’m kind of a big picture kind of person – and so it was difficult...I think it’s impacted me greatly because I learned so much of what I don’t want people around me to feel.

Her experiences in this role working for a principal who did not allow anyone else on staff to be a leader affected Flores deeply, and that experience explicitly informed her leadership when she assumed the principalship at Smith. Flores shares that *“I knew I wanted to empower people around me so that they were helping me, alongside me, to build what we’re building.”* As difficult as her experience was in the assistant principal role with that particular principal, Flores sees value in that struggle, *“I don’t know if I would have been as intentional having not had the other experience [as assistant principal], so I’m sure that was good.”* Understanding that a hallmark of Flores’s

leadership is intention, her experience as an assistant principal, while very trying for her, was also seminal in developing her future leadership commitments and skill set.

The critical incidents of Flores's work described above create a pathway to which the development of many of her leadership belief systems can be attributed. Being hired for a first teaching position by a person who saw her potential connects directly to Flores's steadfast support of her teachers and what they are capable of professionally in their work with students. Her year spent with highly-impacted students and families early in her career, as well as being a teacher who was in the position of being the minority, created a lifelong commitment to serving typically underserved populations. The positive affirmation, efficacy and satisfaction Flores felt in her informal and formal leadership roles as a teacher created a desire to provide leadership opportunities to the teachers in her school. Finally, her experience of being marginalized as an assistant principal, someone who felt "*I was never ever utilized to my potential at all,*" prompted Flores to embrace her leadership and the power of intention and deliberateness in creating a school that values student *and* adult learning, growth, and success.

Life Related Critical Incidents

Flores comes from a family in which every member is an educator, so it seems predestined that she, too, would become an educator. She says "*it was just something that my family held so high and valued so greatly, and thought to be such an honorable profession....making a difference and valu[ing] education.*" Her father, mother, her grandmother, her three siblings, two of her siblings spouses, an aunt, an uncle and her husband are (or were) all teachers and/or principals. Even before her early-career

teaching experience in Baltimore, Flores was steeped in the idea of working in schools that others might avoid. Of her parents, aunt and uncle, and grandmother she says

[They] were always very intentional about working in schools that had a hard to serve population. That was never accidental that they, or even still today, my sisters and my brother and my husband that we're all in hard to serve schools.

For Flores, being raised in a family of educators with commitment to their vocation provided inspiration as to her own passions and eventually her own career path.

Not only does Flores cite her family background as being important to her path as an educator, she explains that while growing up many of her teachers inspired her as well through her “*absolute fabulous relationships with so many teachers growing up.*” These relationships are particularly important to Flores because even though she was raised by teachers, Flores was not always a model student herself. She says “*I was quite a little rebel in middle school and high school and they had no reason to respect me or like me or connect with me at all. And yet, a few of them really did.*” When she became a teacher herself, she leaned upon those memories and the importance of those relationships to her as she worked with students of her own. She consciously decided to follow her teachers as role models in this area of her own practice.

To make sure that kid—we all have them—I was going to make sure I connected with that kid, and by the end of the year they were going to love me and I was going to love him or her knowing that I couldn't count on anyone else to make the difference in the connection with that kid—it was up to me.

Certainly, for Flores, the lessons learned from many of her teachers went far beyond the classroom. These lessons came full circle, however, when Flores herself became a teacher.

Continuing education, utilized as a tool for moving her staff in her leadership practice, also has had a profound effect on Flores. After completing her master's degree in school counseling she *"realized I wasn't so much the touchy-feely type and I really didn't want to hear everyone's sad story,"* she went back to school to get her principal's license because school leadership was a much better fit for her interests and her long-term goals. Almost immediately after completing the coursework for her principal's license, Flores enrolled in a doctoral program. While she is ABD (all-but-dissertation) at this point and does not know if she will complete the degree, she is adamant about the worth of her experience in completing coursework for the doctorate. Flores says *"the coursework and all of the reading and reflecting on the reading—without a doubt contributed to who I am as a leader."* Her continuing education did not end with the completion of her coursework for the doctorate, although now it is less formal. She laughingly says *"my husband and I are junkies"* with regard to the amount of professional reading they do together. Flores also regularly seeks out opportunities to engage in educational discourse and development. She says it is important to her that she is always *"staying curious and continuing to talk with people about this field that we love and trying to always tweak it and make what we do better."* Flores is a lifelong learner, and it shows in her experiences of formal and informal educational opportunity.

Importance of Story to a Leadership Practice

The critical incidents of Flores's life paint a picture of a leader who has the heart of family, teachers and teaching, and learning. These life experiences she shared are in many ways are interwoven with her stories of critical work incidents that have shaped her leadership practice. Her intentional and deliberate work with teachers and others in her school to develop a climate and culture of trust in her school by empowering teachers, distributing leadership, and maximizing teacher capacity are readily linked back to the important critical incidents, both in work and in life that Flores shared through the Narrative Inquiry Interview.

Flores's stories of critical incidents in her life and work illustrate the important nature of a leader's experiences, or their story, in how they interact with followers, situation, and how they lead. As it is important to consider situation or context when describing a leadership practice, it is similarly important to consider the variety of experiences (or contexts) of the leader throughout their lives – work lives and personal lives. Story is an important and meaningful way to garner more depth of knowledge about a leader's practice. Not knowing the background experiences of a leader leads to incomplete understanding of the leader and their practice. As described in the section above, numerous facets of the foundation of her leadership practice appear throughout Flores's stories of her work life and her life outside of work. In the next section, Research Question 4 investigates whether critical incidents in the life and work of other principals in successful schools serving ELA learners can be linked to their leadership practice, much as it was linked to Flores's own identified leadership practice.

Research Question #4

What are the common elements of principals' critical incidents, both work and life related, that contribute to an understanding of how the principals developed, implemented, and maintained these successful leadership practices?

While this case study focuses upon one specific principal, Lisa Flores, it is also part of a larger thematic research study involving three other principals at schools serving ELA learners. To further understand the powerful nature of critical incidents from principals' life and work and the relationship of those incidents to their leadership, a cross-case examination of relevant raw data from the other four case studies is utilized. First common elements of critical incidents (both work and life) are detailed. A summary section points out the importance of these critical work and life incidents for developing, implementing and maintaining an effective leadership practice

Common Elements of Critical Incidents (Work and Life)

Each of the subject principals had very different stories of critical incidents that impacted them in the context of their leadership. Even though the stories and the details were quite different, there were overarching elements common to all of the principals. While critical incidents cannot be easily separated by work or life across cases, common elements can be drawn from each principal's story to provide themes of impactful critical incidents: (a) drive for equity, (b) development of empathy, (c) desire to lead by empowering, (d) recognizing potential in others, and (e) resilience (see Table 10).

Drive for equity. In each of the case studies, principals shared incidents from their lives that instilled for them the drive for leadership for equity. Experiences from childhood were lasting catalysts, as were experiences from later work. As described

Table 10

Critical Incidents (Work and Life) of Principals A-E – Common Elements

	A	B	C	D	E
DRIVE FOR EQUITY	Taught at hard to serve school; family mission	Our kids, not these/those/you; Examples of ELL kids and programs marginalized; Child of single mother	Success can be achieved; “one size does not fit all”	Child of single mother, mixed race; Private school experience	Dislike of ‘inner circle’ relationships; Lack of meaningful evaluation; Background of country in war
DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY	Still strongly affiliates with role of teacher	Felt ‘less than’ because of need to take extra books home as ELL	Background of country in war	“I was the kid who shouldn’t have achieved anything” became nationally ranked athlete in high school	Experience at US University initially overwhelming; Felt sick when had to go to school as a child
DESIRE TO LEAD BY EMPOWERING	Negative experience with principal/supervisor	Strong mentor/role model; stress and challenge – not let people down	Principal expanded leadership responsibilities beyond social worker role	Experience in culture work with 31 schools	Negative experiences with principal/supervisor
RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL IN OTHERS	Self-described rebel in school	Supervisor encouraged to take on leadership	Average student in school when younger, achieved scholarships to four year colleges	Others (hairdressers) encouraged to become educator	Struggled in school; defied authority
RESILIENCE	Single mom;	Single mom; Child of single mother; Non-native English speaker	Immigrant; Non-native English speaker; Worked multiple jobs while attending community college	Child of single mother; mixed race; family history of racism	Immigrant; Non-native English speaker

earlier in Research Question #3, Lisa Flores taught at a school in Baltimore with a 100% poverty rate, and grew up in a home where teaching and leading in hard to serve schools was elevated to a calling with regard to equity for all students. The other principals in these thematic dissertation case studies shared experiences from their lives that led to their own commitment to equity in their leadership of schools.

Having to learn English as a second language herself, the power of language and regard for ELA learners and programs binds Principal B to her commitment to equity for all learners. In assuming the role of principal at her school, Principal B remembers that it was extremely stressful because “*the staff was really divided into ‘those kids.’ You had the ELA-S kids and then you had the other kids and it was ‘those kids.’ It was those kids and ELA-S and never did the two mix.*” The language used by staff when discussing students pointed very notably to serious divisions in belief systems of staff with regard to equity of access and expectation for all students. In Principal B’s opinion, “*the ELS kids were the ones that were blamed for low scores because they were required to learn a second language.*” The language of the staff was a very concrete driver for Principal B in her focus upon equity. She says “*I [didn’t] want to hear anyone talk about ‘those kids’ because they’re not ‘those kids,’ they’re ‘our kids.’ They belong to us.*” Thus, a priority for Principal B early in her principalship was to change that mindset and language and to create a “*culture that accepted all the kids.*”

Regard for ELA learner and programs (or the lack thereof) also solidified Principal B’s drive for equity for her students. Having seen cuts and /or reorganization to programs serving ELA learners over time, Principal B is now adamant in her defense of

these students. When faced with cuts to staffing that would impact the ability of the school to effectively instruct and support ELA-learners, she shared the following:

I was pretty livid...they wanted to cut that. And it's from the fact that you're screwing my kids. You're screwing our ELA-S kids. You're looking at the numbers and that's all you're thinking about is 'Well, we can cut here,' without stopping to think about how is it going to impact kids.

Principal B is wants to ensure that language and systems attest to her belief that all of her students be highly regarded as learners and people.

Principal C, an immigrant to the United States at age 18 and English Language Learner, believes that “*one size does not fit all*” when it comes to ELA learners. He says “*I have reason why I say that, based on my personal experience, based on my personal life and people I work with and the kids I work with.*” Principal C, a refugee of a war-torn country, is passionate about equity of opportunity for his students. Having been homeless, worked minimum wage jobs, and found a path to college, he says “*I want to pressure the teachers to do their best with ELL*” based upon his own experience of a lack of support from schools as an ELL student himself.

Principal C does not limit his expectations to teachers and schools, however. He also includes families of students as well in his press for student success “*I pressure my ELL parents that they need to take care of their kid.*” His message of equity is borne from his own experience and it rings loud and clear. He has very high expectations for his students and their futures. He says plainly, “*The question for my kids is not are you going to college? I ask them, 'which college are you going to?'*” Principal C believes every one of his students can and will be a success story.

Born to a teen-aged single mother, Principal D says “*it’s all about equity for me.*” Being born a bi-racial kid into a family with a long history of racism (her great uncle was a grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan in Kentucky), Principal D says of herself “*I was the kid who should not have achieved anything.*” Instead, she became a nationally ranked athlete in high school, having begun her training six to eight hours a day beginning in second grade. She believes her own story is demonstrative that “*All kids need to have high expectations. All kids can succeed.*”

A teaching experience that Principal D had at an exclusive private school early in her career cemented her feelings about schools with regard to equity, high expectations and access to opportunity. About that experience she says:

The kids flew [in] on their own private jets, the parents didn’t work and they had nannies...They would always secure the perimeter of the campus. I felt as if all kids deserve that -those rich experiences; debating, thinking deeply about things. It was an equity issue for me. I didn’t think that was fair.

For Principal D, as described above, critical incidents from her life and work very directly have informed her drive for equity as a leader and her story is an inexorable part of her leadership.

Principal E describes a dislike of “*inner circle*” relationships and practices she has witnessed and experienced as being instrumental to her drive for equity, or fairness as she often describes the concept. She relays her disdain for principals she worked for that excluded many teachers from opportunities and advantages because they had “*a circle of friends they kept close.*” She also discusses having taught for several years without a principal or evaluator ever entering her classroom, yet she received glowing evaluations

during that time. Principal E says this is “*a question of equity, it’s a question of fairness. We all need feedback. It is unjust and very poor example to treat employees and run a school in that fashion. It’s actually neglect.*”

Being raised in a South American country that was at war during her childhood, Principal E understands the power of access to information and education with regard to larger socio-political contexts. Access to information and education, being foundational to equity, is increasingly on her mind as she moves along in her career. She shares that remembering her experiences in her native country “*has influenced me as I get older and think about how much we take for granted in our free public education. Here it’s normal, one of few places where it’s normal and expected and nobody thinks twice about it.*” Perhaps reflecting upon the experiences related to her childhood schooling during this time leads to her conscious awareness of applying principles of equity and fairness in matters of student access. Principal E says “*I like to be fair when we look at practices here. Like the simple things...If one person has the opportunity, then everyone has to have the opportunity. We work hard not to create unjust or unfair practices.*” The vignettes above reveal a great deal about the drive for equity in which Principal E engages.

Development of empathy. Critical incidents in each of the case study principals’ experiences led to the development of empathy in their school leadership practice. In the case of Flores, she continues to affiliate strongly with classroom teachers, and her own experiences of having been a teacher create within her a desire to honor the feelings within her teaching staff at any given time. When asked about compelling ideals that inform her leadership, she shares “*I just think that having been a teacher, and having*

good years and bad years...I think that ability to then empathize with teachers and then really even to just feel what they're feeling. I make that connection..." If teachers are not being successful, Flores says *"if they have a bad day or begin failing in anything then that's my failure because I've been here from the beginning with so many of them that that's on me."* Understanding how the power of strong yet empathetic leadership in the service of teachers leads to teacher efficacy and satisfaction, Flores sums it up saying proudly *"I am a ridiculous teacher advocate."*

Her own experience as an ELL learner links to Principal B's development of empathy for her students. Principal B shares that despite having a parochial school education in which she enjoyed numerous success, including winning the science fair and other awards, she always felt inadequate. She felt her inadequacy was visible not only to her but to others in that she had to *"bring home all my books. Most other kids were just bringing home one or two...so I thought I was dumb. I always thought I was dumb."* Principal B says it was many years later, even after graduating in the top 10% of her class, that she realized she had done well and was in fact, smart. Recently, Principal B shared her story with the fifth graders at her school, many of whom are ELA learners like she herself had been. She says she told them:

I know exactly where you're coming from. I spoke Spanish just like a lot of you guys...I remember thinking I was stupid because I had to take all the books home and I had to work all night long to figure it out.

In sharing this story with her students, Principal B is showing that she knows their struggles and their concerns, but she also knows they can move beyond them much as she did.

Principal C's compelling experiences as an immigrant/refugee of war underlie the empathy he displays when talking to his students and their families. The empathy he shows, however, is coupled with the high expectations he has for students to succeed. He draws connections between his history and experience and how they too can build paths toward reaching goals of success and achievement, both within and outside of school. Principal C tells his students *"let me share a piece about my life. I had to work hard. I didn't have money, I was poor, but you know that's not stopping you [from] doing the best job you can."* He empathizes with his students, but he does not offer them excuses or ways to avoid learning and hard work. About his students, principal C says very sincerely, *"I want them to be better than me in their life, so that's why I am here."* He knows how hard the struggle for students can be, and he wants them to rise to the challenge and provide a springboard for them to become their best.

As shared in the previous section, Principal D's background was such that there would be any number of reasons it would be seemingly impossible for her to find success as a student and in life. And yet, she did both by achieving at high level athletically and academically. As a high school aged student, Principal D competed nationally in her sport, and was ranked very near the top of all athletes that competed. Later, before she even entertained the idea of continuing in school and becoming an educator, she has already earned two degrees: one in psychology and one in pre-medicine. She understands why people might view a child as having conditions that might hold them back, but she does not accept those conditions as being obstacles to achievement. Principal D's empathy is linked to the students who others believe "cannot achieve" given their

background circumstances. Principal D is proof they can, in fact, achieve and find great success.

Two experiences that Principal E shared offer insight into development of empathy in her leadership. As a child, she struggled in school and did not do well. She was so averse to attending school she says *“I would be sick to my stomach due to how much I hated that school.”* She is grateful to her parents that they did not force her to go to school, and that they found an alternative. This experience of her childhood is very influential to her as a school principal. Principal E says *“I always remembered that, because the worst thing that could happen is for a kid to hate coming [to school].”* She makes sure her staff works on relationships with students because she knows first-hand how important it is at school for a student *“To feel welcome and [feel that] people like you.”*

As an adult, Principal E came to the United States to pursue a master’s degree. She recalls that initially she was overwhelmed and intimidated by how different and how large the campus appeared to be. Describing that experience, she says *“I have never been in such a large library, nor did I know how to use computers or access computers. My first visit was definitely very scary. But everyone was very friendly, you just had to ask.”* This anecdote demonstrates again the connection between Principal E’s own experience and her insistence as a school leader that *“students have to feel welcome, someone has to like them.”* In sharing these two stories, Principal E visibly establishes development of empathy for her students in her practice as a principal.

Desire to lead through empowerment. Common to all of the principals were stories of critical incidents that led to their desire to lead through empowerment. As

explained in Research Question #2, Lisa Flores had a negative experience as an assistant principal with the principal for whom she worked. The principal relegated her to the performance of menial tasks that had little to do with leadership. This experience, as well as her positive experiences as a teacher leader led to her commitment to leading by empowering others. Flores says *“I don’t like to be the leader that you would know I’m the leader. I want to be the leader that other people around me are shining and being recognized.”* As conveyed earlier in this chapter, Flores finds many ways to empower her teachers, in contrast to her own experience of being power-less working for a previous principal.

Principal E also cites an example of negative principal leadership as being a motivator for her own leadership of teachers *“As a teacher I had poor experience with principals. I had some principals who were just very poor role models.”* Different from the attitudes toward teachers of these poor role models, Principal E wants her teachers to *“be invested and for people to want to come to work and make meaning in what they do, they need to be involved in decision making.”* Perhaps reflective of her experience as a child in a country at war, she says very directly about her leadership of teachers *“I don’t think a good leader is a police. I don’t like to lead that way.”*

In contrast to the experiences of Flores and Principal E in having negative principal role models that inspired them to be different, Principal B talks very keenly about her high regard for a principal she had who was not only a role model but a mentor as well. This principal role model, according to Principal B, was *“a strong principal who inspired teachers to be leaders [she] actively sought input.”* The impacts of Principal B’s experiences working with this principal are woven throughout her Narrative Inquiry

Interview. She credits this principal with helping her achieve the principalship while never having been an Administrative Assistant (AA) or Assistant Principal (AP). She says of her work with her mentor *“I had a lot of roles, the biggest one is just [her] allowing me to do a lot of the roles.”* She says she also learned that *“teamwork is important but individualism is, too.”* Principal B believes that her teachers are important, and following her mentor’s example, she says *“I don’t throw teachers away. I believe that you learn and become a better teacher and I have the support in the building to help you.”* Through the examples of critical incidents Principal E shared, it is clear that she too, like her principal role model, has a desire to lead by empowering her teachers.

Prior to becoming a principal, Principal C was a social worker. His desire to lead by empowering teachers can be traced to his own experience working with one of his principals. Principal C recounts that when he approached his principal about needing different challenges and wanting to engage the community more, she gave him license to pursue that work. He says he asked her *“Will you allow me to work with the community and bring the community back to the school, and do all kinds of grant writing, fundraising, planning.”* Principal C says that his principal agreed to his proposal and he was able to do a lot of good for the school with the outreach that she allowed him to pursue. As a testament to his belief in the empowerment of teachers, Principal C says *“I think my idea is the effective school is sometime people don’t need to know who the principal is”* a sentiment that echoes a similar statement by Flores.

Having spent time in an assignment requiring her to *“[go] into schools and figure out what’s going on,”* Principal D shares that she has a background in looking for practices that empower teachers. Tasked with overseeing 31 schools, Principal D spent

time working with staffs for a variety of reasons. Primarily though, she says she “*looked at what was going on and how to form distributed leadership, collective partnerships, and to know the kids.*” For Principal D, the experience of working with school staffs in this way solidified a level of expertise in empowering teachers. She says “it was through that work of helping principals to lead a school that I learned about leading a school.”

Recognition of potential in others. Each of the principals studied have stories of critical incidents that lend themselves to the leadership work of recognizing potential in others. The principals had common experience in this area in that each of them identified an incident in their lives or in their work when someone recognized potential in them that they did not recognize themselves. For Flores and Principal E, they shared early experiences of not being what is traditionally thought of as “successful” in school. Flores’s story about the principal who had suspended her as a student later, and later giving her that first teaching job and those stories of teachers not giving up on Flores even when she acted out as recounted in Research Question #3. Principal E’s critical incident in this area was her parent’s recognition that Principal E’s defiance of authority and school avoidance had more to do with the school environment she was in than in any deficit in her character. Even now, she says “*I am grateful that my parents listened to me.*” Flores and Principal E, both struggled in school as students, yet both became successful principals because even early in their lives, teachers and family saw potential in them and gave them opportunity and encouragement.

Principal D’s own experience related to recognition of potential is quite simple. After having already received two undergraduate degrees (psychology and pre-med) but not feeling fulfilled and looking for something different, her hairdresser suggested that

she become an educator “*because kids always gravitated towards me.*” Principal D reports that as a result of that conversation “*I took some education classes and here I am.*”

Principal C’s complex and many-layered experiences throughout his work and life offer multiple examples of times when people recognized potential in him. Perhaps most fortuitously, when homeless immediately after immigrating to the United States,

Principal C was taken in by a family affiliated with a church. Of this family, he recounts
At first they felt sorry for me, but I asked them to help me get back to life and to help me find a job that I could work and support myself and get my parents...they adopted me, and helped me go to college.

While Principal C believes the time frame, in 1975, made this arrangement possible because “*things were different than now...It was pretty trusting,*” he understands that this recognition of potential in him by this family provided the platform for him to begin his educational and career path in the United States.

A critical incident regarding recognition of potential from Principal C’s work experience led directly to his pursuing his principal’s license (formerly called a Type D certification). Based upon his efforts and success in engaging his school community through outreach as well as his work on a site-based management mandate while he was a school social worker, he was encouraged to go back to school to obtain his principal credentials. Principal C says “*one day my principal called me and she said, Principal C, you know, we really want you to think about going back and getting your Type D...and I [thought], ‘Is she crazy?’*” But this encouragement of Principal C to rise to his potential did not end with his immediate supervisor. He says that he was also contacted by the

superintendent, who reiterated the message that his principal has already given, saying again, “*Principal C, we want you to get your Type D.*” So, this reinforcement of Principal C by supervisors who recognized his potential led to his return to school and accomplishment of obtaining his principal’s license. His history of being a war refugee, an immigrant, and an English Language Learner did not limit Principal C because others recognized potential in him and provided supports to achieve that potential. Of all the principal case studies, Principal C likely has the most profound examples of the importance of recognizing potential in others, examples which inform the beliefs he carries with him each day in his work with students and teachers.

Resilience. Leadership requires resilience. The challenges that face principals on a daily basis are not limited to determining the most effective methods and practices in student achievement. Being able to continue leading a school in the face of challenge – expected and unexpected, requires fortitude and strength. Principals must have the ability to be flexible, agile and emotionally strong in order to serve their students, teachers and communities. Critical incidents in their lives bond these principals in their ability to be resilient in their leadership, and to continue their work even in the face of tasks and/or events that appear overwhelming.

Of all of the common elements of the case study principals’ critical incidents, the stories of *resilience* share the most similarities. Lisa Flores and Principal B, both young single mothers raising children while working and furthering their educations, speak to the fortitude and drive it took to get through that time in their lives. Principal B shares “*I was a young mom, so I struggled. I was a single mom...my experiences have made me who I am.*” Not only did Principal B have the experience of being a single mother, like

Principal D, she was the child of a single mother. Both principals share their admiration for their mothers in providing examples of strength and commitment to them as children, even though their individual circumstances were extremely difficult. Principal D says “*I had a mother who was a hippie, a teen-aged mom who thought I could do anything in the world – good thing.*” Her mother’s faith in her led to her being a nationally ranked athlete as a teenager. Describing her mother, Principal B says “*My mom was a strong leader. Not necessarily in any leadership role. She was strong woman.*” The powerful examples of resilience their single mothers set for them surely creates resiliency in the principal leadership of Principal B and Principal D.

Principal B, Principal C, and Principal E all share the common experience of being English Language Learners when they themselves were learners. Having to learn English in classrooms with little to no support resulted in the need for these principals to work harder to achieve academic goals, and to persevere even when language barriers seemed insurmountable. Principal C says that at the time “*the ESL process, [I] barely [made] it through college,*” but yet he did because he would not give up on pursuing his goals. As described earlier in this section, Principal B’s memories of “*taking home books and feeling stupid*” because she had to work so much harder than her English-speaking peers did not stand in the way of her winning academic awards and graduating in the top 10% of her class. While Principal E learned English as a second language in her home country, her experience coming to the United States as non-native speaker and immigrant required that she set aside her fears, as described in her account of going to the library of a large university for the first time, and persevere so that she could accomplish her goal of completing her master’s degree at an American university.

Summary

The critical incidents (work and life) shared by the case study principals offer the opportunity to draw out commonalities and themes that support their leadership practices. Furthermore, because these principals, by virtue of their inclusion in this study, have met certain criteria to be deemed successful, it is of interest that the themes of (a) drive for equity, (b) development of empathy, (c) desire to lead by empowering, (d) recognizing potential in others, and (e) resilience emerge from all of these successful principals' critical incidents. These common elements and themes, while perhaps not common to all principals, are in fact common to *these* principals; principals who have realized success in working with ELA learners in schools with substantial poverty rates and other demographic indicators consistent with schools labeled as hard to serve. The stories of critical incidents shared in the above section further substantiate the notion that the stories of leaders cannot be separated from their leadership practice.

Research Question #5

Based on a review of relevant literature (the conceptual underpinnings and evidenced-based strategies) and evidence gathered in this study, what is an applied definition of a leadership practice?

This section, which will answer Research Question #5, begins with revisiting the working definition of a leadership practice that was formed based on a review of relevant literature prior to beginning the study. Additional elements of a leadership practice emerged from data analysis, including tools and activities, proximal goals, distal goals, and critical incidents from the work and life experiences of principals. With the inclusion

of these newly uncovered elements of a leadership practice, an emergent and applied definition of a leadership practice evolves.

Definition of a Leadership Practice Prior to Study

Prior to beginning this study, a working definition of principal leadership practice was developed. This definition was based upon an amalgam of the VAL-ED Matrix, the ES-I Framework, the Leadership Practice Triangle, as well as a focus upon a specific work associated with achieving a goal or set of goals. The working definition of a principal leadership practice for student achievement involved the following four specific areas, (a) what the leader does and what they focus on as a principal, (b) the engagement and interaction of the principal with others, (c) the contexts within which the principal exists, (d) and the movement of the principal and the organization toward some goal. Adopting a definition of a leadership practice was instrumental in moving forward with the study. The study itself then revealed additional critical elements or concepts inherent to a comprehensive understanding of a leadership practice.

Elements of a Leadership Practice That Emerged In Data Analysis

The findings of this study illustrate additional elements or concepts that are fundamental to developing, implementing and maintaining an applied definition of leadership practice within the context of successful schools serving high poverty ELA students.

Tools and activities. Engaging in a leadership practice requires the employment of specific tools and activities designed to support lead toward the achievement of proximal goals. In this particular case study professional development, teacher leadership teams (data team meetings, school leadership group meetings, staff

development team meetings, grade level team meetings), a peer observation system and continuing education were specific tools and activities used by this principal to move teachers toward a higher level of performance and practice.

Proximal goals. Proximal goals serve as markers of the efficacy of the leader in moving toward distal goals, or outcomes of a principal's leadership practice. The intentional focus by Flores on school culture, school climate, and trust building among staff resulted in several proximal goals being developed and met over time. Empowered teachers, collaborative teams, and a culture of teacher capacity all serve as proximal goals of Flores's leadership practice.

Distal goals. Simply put, distal goals can be framed as the ultimate outcome that a principal seeks with regard to a particular leadership practice. At Smith, the outcomes of Flores's leadership practice have positively impacted student achievement as evidenced by improved student growth on standardized measures. The three proximal goals (empowered teachers, distributed leadership, and teacher capacity) employed by Flores boosted student achievement, which was the distal goal of Flores's leadership practice.

Critical experiences – work and life. Critical incidents in a leader's life and work are foundational to how a leader interacts with followers, situation, and how they lead. Much like seeking understanding of situation or context when describing a leadership practice, it is similarly important to consider the variety of experiences of a leader throughout their lives. Critical incidents of importance to leaders and their leadership practice are occurring at all times, but certain particular incidents are more

influential than others to a leader. In this study, the critical incidents of Flores and the other principals are interwoven in the fabric of their school leadership.

An Emergent and Applied Definition of a Leadership Practice

While the working definition based upon the VAL-ED Matrix, the ES-I Framework, the Leadership Practice Triangle, and a focus upon a specific goal or set of goals was sufficient to frame the work of this study, the study itself revealed that there are additional facets of a leadership practice that the initial definition did not contain. An emergent and applied definition of a principal leadership practice for student achievement still involves the following four specific areas: (a) what the leader does and what they focus on as a principal, (b) the engagement and interaction of the principal with others, (c) the contexts within which the principal exists, and (d) the movement of the principal and the organization toward some goal. Additionally, as this study demonstrates, an applied definition of a leadership practice also includes the engagement of tools and activities by the leader as well as the use of proximal goals as pathways to the distal goal(s) or outcomes of the leadership practice. Woven throughout a principal leadership practice are the critical incidents of the principal's life that have contributed to their growth as a leader and to the development of a leadership practice.

Summary

This study found evidence of a leadership practice in context and our work produced additional elements not in the literature. Through the work of looking for actual leadership practices, a working definition of a leadership practice evolved into an applied definition that includes the elements of tools and activities, proximal goals, distal goals, and critical incidents of work and life that contribute to shaping a leader.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents summary, conclusion, and recommendation sections for this study. The *summary* section reviews the purpose of the study, the research questions, the conceptual frameworks, criteria for selecting study schools, the subject of the study, unit of analysis, data collection instruments and methods used to collect data. The *conclusions* section presents key findings from the study, their relationship to prior literature cited in the study, and major implications of those findings for practice. In the final section, *recommendations* for practice and future research are presented to augment the leadership work of principals, other school districts, and principal preparation programs. This section concludes with recommendations for future research related to specific and particularized leadership practices in successful schools serving ELA learners and finishes with final thoughts.

Summary of Study

This case study was designed to discover and name the specific leadership practices and stories behind principals' success in schools that are showing strong achievement trends in ELA learner populations. The purpose of this case study, which was part of a larger multiple-case thematic dissertation study focused on the leadership practices of principals leading successful schools serving ELA learners, was to identify specific and particularized *leadership practices* identified by the principal as *making the difference* in the school reaching the levels of student achievement that resulted in this school having gains on the CSAP/TCAP and CELA tests for three concurrent years. The

researchers believe that studying principal leadership in successful schools serving ELA learners can help to define those leadership practices that are value added for student achievement.

The five research questions that guided this study are:

1. Using the definition of a leadership practice as a guide (developed in chapter two), what are the specific and particularized self-identified leadership practices being used by the principal in this study to ensure a positive impact of that school on student growth/achievement?

2. How do the identified successful leadership practices align with key conceptual and evidence-based frameworks (VAL-ED Matrix and the Essential Supports & Indicators Framework) used in this study?

3. How do stories of this principal's critical incidents (both work and life related) contribute to an understanding of how self-identified leadership practices emerged and flourished within this particular school and community context?

4. What are the common elements of principals' critical incidents, both work and life related, that contribute to an understanding of how the principals developed, implemented, and maintained these successful leadership practices?

5. Based on a review of relevant literature (the conceptual underpinnings and evidenced-based strategies) and evidence gathered in this study, what is an applied definition of a leadership practice?

To guide the study, two specific evidence-based conceptual frameworks that examine leadership practices and behaviors linked to student outcomes were chosen. The first conceptual framework, the VAL-ED Matrix, comes from evidence-based research

(Goldring et al. (2009) underpinning the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education. The VAL-ED Matrix, representing the intersection of six core components and six key processes, illustrates 36 specific areas of learner-centered leadership. The second conceptual framework, the Essential Supports and Indicators (ES-I) framework, comes from the work of researchers (Bryk, et al., 2010) studying school improvement in Chicago. The ES-I framework is built from five essential supports and fourteen indicators of school improvement. Both of these conceptual frameworks were used in the design of this study, the development of interview protocols, and to guide data analysis.

The criteria used to pick the school eligible to participate as a “successful school” was determined through a concurrent study being conducted in Denver Public Schools by the University of Colorado Denver. The school selected for this case study was identified as being successful based on five criteria for inclusion: (a) an open enrollment policy, (b) at least 40% of total enrollment consisting of ELL students, (c) a total School Performance Framework (SPF) rating greater than 49% for elementary schools, and great than 45% for middle schools and high schools, (d) at least 50% of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch, (e) have gains on the CSAP and CELA tests for three consecutive years relative to schools serving the same grade levels, and (f) a principal in place for at least three years.

While the subject of this case study was the principal who has been identified as successful and serves a number of ELA learners in the school that they lead, the unit of analysis was the specific and particularized leadership practices exhibited by the principal. Leadership practice is the construct that resulted from review of the literature and the application to practice of two learner-centered conceptual frameworks.

Three instruments were used to collect data for this study – the VAL-ED Survey, the Leadership Practice Interview Protocol, and the Narrative Inquiry Protocol. The VAL-ED Survey was completed by the principal, the principal’s supervisor, and teachers in the school. Based upon the results of the VAL-ED Survey, follow-up interviews with directed questions in areas deemed “distinguished” were conducted. The Narrative Inquiry Protocol was used to prompt the principal to share the particular experiences of the personal and professional journey that has led to their current leadership success and development of their successful leadership practices.

Data collected from VAL-ED resulted in reports which included mean and median effectiveness scores generated through the six core components and six key processes subscales. Data analysis for the interviews included two levels of coding: open coding and axial coding. Interview data was transcribed and loaded into DeDoose, an online platform for analyzing text. Coding inventories created from the ES-I and the alignment of ES-I to VAL-ED were used to code results of the interview protocol in DeDoose. Even though data were limited by virtue of the case-study methodology and focus upon one principal, data gathered through three research instruments were rich with content applicable to this study. Data were analyzed and findings for each research question were revealed. Conclusions, drawn from data analysis, are described below.

Conclusions

Key findings distilled from Chapter IV are discussed below and include references to the relevant literature of the field of leadership and how these findings support, refute, or extend that literature. In addition, implications drawn from these key findings are also discussed in the section below.

Summary of Key Findings

Key findings revealed from each of the research questions are offered below.

The relationship of each of the key findings to literature contextualizes the key findings within the field of leadership.

1. Leadership practices do, in fact, exist in context. A leadership practice is multi-faceted. Viewing a leadership practice in terms of a work focus, tools and activities, proximal goals and distal goals (or outcomes) undertaken by the leaders and followers working within a specific situation, helps support in understanding the complex level of interactions involved in a leadership practice.

2. In this case study, the leadership practice of the principal in a successful school serving ELA learners links to research-based frameworks, the VAL-ED and the ES-I. Elements of these frameworks help provide insight into how the work focus – inherent to leadership practice applied - of a principal is viewed by self and others.

3. To more fully understand a leadership practice, it is important to consider the variety of critical incidents that a leader experiences throughout their work and personal lives. Examining a principal's leadership practice through story allows for qualitative themes and patterns to emerge that otherwise might remain hidden. This qualitative data can be used to discover traits and values that are important to understanding leadership practice applied.

4. Common elements and themes exist in the stories of critical incidents of principals in this study, all of whom have realized success in working with ELA learners in schools with substantial poverty rates and other demographic indicators consistent with schools labeled as hard to serve. In this study, the elements and themes identified as

being common to all of the principals' critical incidents are driver for equity, development of empathy, desire to lead by empowering, recognition of potential in others, and resilience. These common elements also serve to add further depth and breadth to understanding the leadership practices of these principals.

5. In addition to research-based frameworks of leadership practice, this study revealed that an applied definition of a leadership practice includes the elements of tools and activities, proximal goals, distal goals, and critical incidents of work and life that contribute to shaping a leader.

Relationship of Key Findings to Literature

This study is grounded in various periods of leadership research and literature. Effective schools research, research about direct and indirect principal behaviors, instructional leadership, early references to leadership practice, distributed leadership, evidence-based leadership frameworks are all reflected through this study. The relationship of each period of leadership research and literature to this study is described below.

In response to the 1966 Coleman Report, which asserted that family background made the difference in whether a student could learn and be successful, and that schools could do little for students who came from poor homes, numerous researchers (Brookover & Lezotte, 1978; Edmonds, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston 1979) conducted studies that are foundational to what would become the effective schools research movement. The effective schools movement demonstrated that students from impoverished and highly impacted environments can, in fact, find success in school and achieve at high levels. This study is related to the

effective schools movement in that it demonstrates that students, regardless of socio-economic background, can and do achieve at high levels.

While effective schools research established that highly impacted students can and do achieve, the next iteration of leadership study examined whether principal behaviors directly or indirectly influence student achievement. Evidence was presented that the principal can have an impact on student achievement (Hallinger et al., 1996). Further, it was established that student achievement outcomes can be influenced by the actions of the principal upon the climate of the school (Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood & Wisenbaker, 1978; Hallinger et al., 1996; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). This study is aligned with this body of research because the study clearly establishes that principals, through leadership practice applied, influence student achievement.

There is a body of research and literature that moves beyond principal behaviors to the idea of instructional leadership. Strong principal leadership behaviors in the area of instructional leadership have been shown through a variety of research to correlate with increased student achievement (Blase & Blase, 1999; Cotton, 2003; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Smith & Andrews, 1989). The results of the VAL-ED Survey and the data gathered through the interview protocols in this study point to the strong instructional leadership employed by the case study principal in moving her staff toward more effective instructional practices to improve student achievement.

Early references to leadership practice by Kouzes and Posner (2007) includes the creation of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) which included five practices and

ten commitments, all of which are leader-centered. This study extended beyond the LPI work in that the LPI does not take into account followers and context and the nature of interaction that must exist in leadership practice applied.

Distributed leadership underscores the interactions of school leaders with others in the organizational situation. The research and literature about distributed leadership emphasizes the actions of the leader in conjunction with the nature of interactions between the leadership practice and further interaction with formal and informal leaders, followers, and situation (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001, 2004). This study firmly establishes that a leadership practice applied contains these critical components of distributed leadership, in addition to the other important elements that emerged as shared in key findings. HP-HP research fuses key elements of effective schools and distributed leadership research and literature. Predicated on the idea that students living in poverty can and do achieve academically, HP-HP research and the resulting Readiness Model also emphasize the nature of interaction between learners (Calkins, Genther, Belfore, & Lash, 2007). The HP-HP and distributed leadership research and literature provide frameworks for leadership, but do not dictate how leadership should happen in any given context, which parallels leadership practice defined. Leader, followers and context will dictate through their interaction how any particular leadership practice evolves.

The key findings from this study also support and augment the literature base of school leadership. Key findings from Research Question #1 support what is known about distributed leadership in a variety of ways. Distributed leadership demands attention beyond a single-leader perspective toward the interactions of leaders with and within

context, environment and followers (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). The theory of distributed leadership is grounded in activity theory and distributed cognition (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). The findings suggest that tools and activities are critical to a leadership practice applied. Diamond explains that activity theory is about the way a system works with regard to a particular activity and that there are numerous contributing factors to any activity that move it beyond a single action. The leadership practice revealed through this study is embedded in various systems and is far beyond any single actions.

Spillane and Diamond (2007) define a distributed perspective of leadership in schools as the interaction of leaders, followers, and situation, as represented in their Leadership Practice Triangle. Foundationally, this perspective is sound. This study further establishes the interactions necessary to a leadership practice in context. Additionally, this study specifically names tools and activities, proximal goals, and distal goals as compelling added elements of a leadership practice applied.

Findings resulting from answering Research Question #2 link the leadership practice applied of the principal in a successful school serving ELA learners to research-based frameworks. The effectiveness of the VAL-ED Survey as a measure of principal leadership is well-established through the literature as being a valid measure of learner-centered principal leadership. Using 360-degree feedback, from teachers, principals, and supervisors, the VAL-ED was distinctively designed to examine leadership behaviors that impact student achievement (Elliott, Murphy, Goldring, & Porter, 2009). Using the VAL-ED Survey to gather perception data of a principal's leadership from multiple respondent groups reinforces the idea that leadership is the interaction of leaders,

followers, and situation and not some “thing” that is done in isolation (Spillane et al., 2004). The use of the VAL-ED Survey with Flores, her teachers, and her supervisor allowed the researcher to narrow the focus of the interviews, as well as to mine data specific to Flores’s identified strengths. Data gathered through the Leadership Practice Interview and the Narrative Inquiry Interview protocols supported Flores’s areas of strength as identified by the VAL-ED results.

The key findings for Research Question #3 and Research Question #4 emphasize the importance of a principal’s story and background to their leadership practice as well as subsequent examination of the leadership practice through the lens of the principal’s experiences in their work and in their life. This finding is well supported through the literature regarding narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry, because it is about human experience and human stories, allows for the surfacing of complex and nuanced facets of a human subject, even that which might not be consciously recognized or has been hidden. This methodology is particularly well suited to the very human experiences of teaching and leading (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Gough, 1991; Grumet, 1981, Walter & Mertova, 2007).

Narrative inquiry is based on the assumption that human beings make sense out of their life experiences by telling stories (Bell, 2002). In this study, the researcher was able to see both of these phenomena occurring – the surfacing of particular experiences, large and small, as well as sense-making through storytelling. As the principal contextualized and reflected about various vignettes and anecdotes from her life, she drew connections to her leadership and her belief systems with regard to students and education. This level of engagement allowed the case study to achieve an element of ‘thick description,’ which

provides more complete understanding of a subject (Merriam, 2009), as was the case with Flores, the other principals and their applied leadership practices. The findings from Research Question #4 extend the research in that they highlight the power of storytelling and narrative not just from the perspective of a single case study participant. Using narrative inquiry methodology with individual participants by aggregating the results of the data allows for the distillation of themes and common elements. In this case, the common themes and elements were then linked to leadership practice.

The key findings of Research Question #5 link strongly to the work of Bryk, et al. (2010) in that the definition of an applied leadership practice resulting in student achievement requires that the principal (leader) must be the driver for change, and that leader as driver is vital for improvements in Essential Support (ES) areas of parent-community ties, professional capacity, a student-centered learning climate, and instructional guidance. The complexities of an applied leadership practice, including the elements of tools and activities, proximal goals, and distal goals, and informed by critical incidents of work and life, rest with the principal through the engagement of followers and the situation. It follows that student achievement outcomes can be influenced by the actions of the principal upon the climate of the school through the employment of leadership practice applied, as was evidenced by the case study of Flores and supported in the literature of leadership and leadership for ELA learners (Carrejo & Cortez, 2010; Day, et al. 2009; Hallinger et al., 1996; Miramontes et al. 2011).

Discussion of Implications

1. Leadership practices do exist in context. Understanding the complex and multi-faceted nature of leadership practices disallows the oversimplification of school

improvement and student achievement goals and goal-setting. Leadership practices are idiosyncratic and cannot be replicated, due the fact that the leader, followers, and context or situation are unique to a particular time and place. What *can* be used is the knowledge of what constitutes a leadership practice applied and the understanding that interactions, tools and activities, proximal and distal goals, and critical incidents all must be attended to in a leadership practice.

2. Leadership practice reflects a system, and not a singular action. The use of evidence-based leadership frameworks can assist in narrowing the work focus of a leader within leadership practice. Assets and areas for growth as aligned to evidence-based leadership frameworks provide direction and feedback.

3. Critical incidents are important to the development of a leader. They cannot be ignored and should be surfaced for increased self-awareness and efficacy on the part of the leaders. Critical incidents cannot be separated from the leader.

4. Even though critical incidents will differ between principals, thematically there are commonalities that inform principal leadership practice. Mining common themes of critical incidents among principals can allow for the development of connections between certain themes and distinct skill sets of principals in specific contexts or situations.

5. An applied definition of a leadership practice allows for any number of pathways to student achievement. While there is not one specific recipe, there are specific ingredients: leader, followers, context, tools and activities, proximal and distal goals, and critical incidents from work and life.

Recommendations

The investigation of leadership practices of principals in successful schools serving ELA learners resulted in findings that support specific recommendations for consideration. These recommendations for practice for principals, school districts, and principal preparation programs are presented in the sections below. Recommendations are also made for future research opportunities in the area of leadership practice applied.

Recommendations for Practice

The recommendations for practice outlined below are supported by findings from this study. Recommendations for practice are offered for three levels of stakeholders: principals, school districts, and principal preparation programs.

Principals

Based on the findings of this study, with regard to principals, the researcher recommends:

1. Principals should avail themselves of professional development that allows them to learn about applied leadership practices and the complex nature of engaging in a leadership practice. Professional readings about leadership theory, activities to support development and refinement of personal theories of leadership, and reflective support structures along with peer coaching can help principals to develop in their understanding and engagement in leadership practice applied.

2. When considering their leadership practice goal(s), principals should attend to the interaction between themselves, their followers, and larger contexts or situations. Principals should be intentional in the tools and activities they employ to reach short term (proximal) and long term (distal) goals of leadership practice. The power of a leadership

practice applied demonstrated in this study speaks to the value of deliberateness in this work.

3. Principals should engage in reflective consideration of how critical incidents in their lives and work impact their leadership, to the benefit or detriment of the staff and students in their schools. Personal stories cannot be separated from leadership practice, nor should they be. Critical incidents provide motivation (negative or positive) to leader, and understanding these incidents as motivators or drivers can help a leader to more fully realize the potential of their leadership practice applied.

4. Principals should consider employing a research-based leadership survey, such as the VAL-ED, to gather input from their staff, their supervisor, as well as their own responses to give them insight into their leadership practice as viewed by themselves and others. Measures of domains of leadership can provide valuable guidance as to where a principal might need professional development or other supports for their practice. A comprehensive survey tool can also provide evidence of leadership domains to be celebrated and replicated.

School Districts

Based on the findings of this study, with regard to school districts, the researcher recommends:

1. School districts should create professional development opportunities for principals that allow them to learn about applied leadership practice and the complex nature of engaging in a leadership practice. Activities such as story building, taking the VAL-ED Survey, and/or an audit of the situation in their school could benefit practicing principals and support their professional development and ongoing work.

2. School districts should consider employing a research-based leadership survey, such as the VAL-ED, to more clearly understand the leadership skill sets of their principals in context. Results of principal leadership surveys can provide direction to school district officials and supervisors of principals as to areas in which a principal might need professional development, support, or remediation. A survey of principals can also provide evidence of leadership domains to be celebrated and replicated, and could support the creation of peer coaching and collaboration opportunities between principals.

3. Eliciting critical incidents from principals with regard to work and life experiences that inform leadership could assist school districts in appropriate placement of principals based on particular themes, such as empathy or resilience. Different schools and staffs need different types of principals given particular contexts or situations at any given time.

Principal Preparation Programs

Based on the findings of this study, with regard to principal preparation programs, the researcher recommends:

1. Principal preparation programs should prepare instructional materials, including readings about leadership theory, activities to support development of the candidate's own theory of leadership, and reflective support structures to provide foundational grounding in leadership. This foundation should then be used to move candidates toward understanding the relationship of the leader and leadership to followers as well as the relationship to context and situation. Understanding the relationship of

leader, follower and context or situation is fundamental to leadership practice applied, which will be required of candidates once they are practicing principals.

2. Similar to the recommendation for school districts, principal preparation programs should create professional development opportunities for candidates that support their learning with regard applied leadership practice and the complex nature of engaging in a leadership practice.

Recommendations for Research

Further research in the area of an applied definition of leadership practice is recommended. The small number of case studies represented in this thematic dissertation research study as well as the short timeline of the study itself inherently limits the findings. The small size of the original case study pool, the selection criteria for principal participation, and the involvement of a single district also limit the results of the study. In order to further this research in an effort to reveal findings that may be generalizable to other principals and schools as well as add to the literature base and understanding of applied leadership practice, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Increase the number of case study principals participating in the study.
2. Include observations of the leader (principal) and followers (teachers) *in situ* (context or situation) to add more depth and breadth to the study of an applied leadership practice.
3. Extend the timeline of the study to investigate applied leadership practice over a longer period of time to check for changes or further emergence.
4. Delve more deeply into how critical incidents of principals' work and lives and inform their leadership practice.

5. Investigate whether there are certain themes of critical incidents of principals' work and lives that are common to principals successfully leading in particular environments.

Final Thoughts

As a practicing principal, engaging in this study identifying a leadership practice applied in a real school setting was not only satisfying from the point of view of being a researcher but also from the point of view of being a principal myself. Not only did I learn a great deal about leadership and leadership practice applied, but I also came away with much food for thought with regard to my own practice. Similar to the case study principal, Lisa Flores, climate and culture at my school are fundamental to my leadership in the engagement of my staff for improved instruction and student achievement. One area within Flores's work on culture and climate was particularly striking to me, and makes me want to grow in that same area. Flore's strong belief in her teachers and their ability to grow and learn was extremely compelling. She was very clear that she does not tolerate deficit talk in her school about students, and she models this expectation with regard to how she talks about her teachers. This is not to say that she does not hold her teachers accountable for their performance or that she makes excuses for poor performance, because she does. What it does mean is that she approaches her work with teachers from the mindset that they are professionals and that as professionals they want to always be improving.

I would have liked to have had more time to engage in the study, and to have been able to spend time at Smith interacting with teachers and students. Being able to observe the work that Flores described, particularly the various school leadership groups and ELA

learner classrooms in action would have been interesting and instructional. Overall, I felt this study was a good fit for me in terms of my interests as a learner and as a practitioner.

Finally, I appreciated the thematic group approach to this dissertation. The field of education is increasingly aware of the value of collaboration at all levels. The doctoral dissertation process is no exception. Being able to collaborate on initial phases of this study as well as having colleagues who were equally vested in similar areas of research provided a great deal of support to me personally and academically as I navigated this process.

APPENDIX A

VAL-ED SURVEY

<div> High Standards for Student Learning Completed: 0 of 12 </div>		Sources of Evidence Check Key Sources of Evidence						Effectiveness Rating Choose one to indicate level of effectiveness or check 'Don't Know'					
		Reports From Others	Personal Observation	School Documents	School Projects or Activities	Other Sources	No Evidence	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Satisfactorily Effective	Highly Effective	Outstandingly Effective	Don't Know
Planning	develops a plan for high standards of student performance that are measurable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	plans for rigorous academic and social learning goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing	coordinates tasks and resources to meet high standards for student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	recruits highly qualified faculty to meet performance goals for both academic and social learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting	supports faculty in helping students reach high standards of learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	creates conditions that help faculty and students reach ambitious learning targets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Advocating	advocates for students with special needs when making decisions about high standards for student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	challenges low expectations for students at risk of failure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Communicating	discusses information with faculty on progress toward achieving school goals and student learning targets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	discusses school goals for student learning with faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring	uses data from multiple sources to monitor student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	uses data to evaluate students' behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>

<div> Rigorous Curriculum Completed: 0 of 12 </div>		Sources of Evidence Check Key Sources of Evidence						Effectiveness Rating Choose one to indicate level of effectiveness or check 'Don't Know'					
		Reports From Others	Personal Observation	School Documents	School Projects or Activities	Other Sources	No Evidence	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Satisfactorily Effective	Highly Effective	Outstandingly Effective	Don't Know
Planning	plans curriculum to maximize student opportunity to learn essential knowledge and skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	develops a rigorous curriculum for students with special needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing	implements a rigorous curriculum in programs for students with special needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	coordinates a rigorous curriculum across grade levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting	supports participation in professional development that deepens teachers' understanding of a rigorous curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	provides teachers with time to work on developing and strengthening the curricular program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Advocating	advocates that all programs for students with special needs deliver a rigorous curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	promotes the importance of a rigorous curriculum to students of all ability levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Communicating	discusses during faculty meetings how to improve the rigor of the curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	listens to faculty about how to strengthen the curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring	uses disaggregated student achievement data to monitor the rigor of all curriculum programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	monitors the curriculum through frequent visits to classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>

<div> Quality Instruction Completed: 0 of 12 </div>		Sources of Evidence Check Key Sources of Evidence						Effectiveness Rating Choose one to indicate level of effectiveness or check 'Don't Know'					
		Reports From Others	Personal Observation	School Documents	School Projects or Activities	Other Sources	No Evidence	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Satisfactorily Effective	Highly Effective	Outstandingly Effective	Don't Know
How effective am I at ensuring the school...													
Planning	plans faculty hiring policies with a focus on effective instructional practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	plans opportunities for teachers to improve their instruction through professional development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing	implements a mentoring program for new teachers focused on effective instructional practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	implements procedures to protect instructional time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting	allocates instructional resources to maximize the quality of instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	secures resources necessary to deliver high quality instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Advocating	challenges the community to provide additional instructional resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	advocates additional instructional opportunities for students most in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Communicating	communicates feedback to teachers about their instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	discusses instructional practices with faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring	uses data to monitor the quality of instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	observes each teacher's instructional practices routinely to provide feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>

<div> Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior Completed: 0 of 12 </div>		Sources of Evidence Check Key Sources of Evidence						Effectiveness Rating Choose one to indicate level of effectiveness or check 'Don't Know'					
		Reports From Others	Personal Observation	School Documents	School Projects or Activities	Other Sources	No Evidence	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Satisfactorily Effective	Highly Effective	Outstandingly Effective	Don't Know
Planning	plans strategies to develop shared beliefs about professional practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	plans for a culture of shared responsibility for the social and academic learning of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing	builds a culture of continuous improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	builds a school environment that is safe and orderly for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting	provides a positive environment in which student learning is the central focus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	encourages collaboration among faculty that creates a culture of learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Advocating	recognizes the contributions of diverse students when developing school culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	promotes teacher behavior that is respectful of the diverse backgrounds of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Communicating	communicates with students about the aspects of a positive culture focused on learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	communicates with teachers about the aspects of a positive school environment focused on student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring	monitors the school culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>
	evaluates teachers' behaviors when monitoring the culture of learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/>

<div> Connections to External Communities Completed: 0 of 12 </div>		Sources of Evidence Check Key Sources of Evidence						Effectiveness Rating Choose one to indicate level of effectiveness or check 'Don't Know'					
		Reports From Others	Personal Observation	School Documents	School Projects or Activities	Other Sources	No Evidence	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Satisfactorily Effective	Highly Effective	Outstandingly Effective	Don't Know
Planning	plans for the use of external community resources to promote academic and social learning goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	plans activities to engage families in student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing	builds a positive, open relationship with the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	implements programs to help parents assist their children to be successful in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting	supports teachers to work with community agencies on behalf of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	motivates teachers to be responsive to all families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocating	advocates for students in need of special services with the external community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	advocates for social services needed by students and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating	discusses the results of student achievement tests with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	listens to families regarding the social and academic learning of their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	analyzes data about parental involvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	evaluates the effectiveness of its partnerships with the community in advancing academic and social learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

<div> Performance Accountability Completed: 0 of 12 </div>		Sources of Evidence Check Key Sources of Evidence						Effectiveness Rating Choose one to indicate level of effectiveness or check 'Don't Know'					
		Reports From Others	Personal Observation	School Documents	School Projects or Activities	Other Sources	No Evidence	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Satisfactorily Effective	Highly Effective	Outstandingly Effective	Don't Know
Planning	develops a plan that holds teachers accountable for having positive relationships with students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	plans data collection to hold students accountable for academic and social learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing	implements programs and practices to hold faculty accountable to reach the highest levels of performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	implements programs and practices that hold the school accountable to families for the learning of their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting	provides expertise to make decisions about holding students accountable for their learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	provides procedures that hold students accountable for their learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocating	advocates for shared accountability by faculty for student academic and social learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	promotes an accountability system that represents the diverse views of families and the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating	communicates to families the purpose and nature of its accountability programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	communicates with faculty the purpose and nature of its accountability programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	analyzes the influence of student accountability on achieving high standards of academic learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	analyzes the influence of faculty evaluations on student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Core Component: High Standards for Student Learning and All Key Processes

You [name of principal] were scored at a high level in the area of ***High Standards for Student Learning*** on the VAL-ED Survey. I am trying to identify specific and particularized leadership practices that you may be using to have earned this rating on this 360-degree evaluation from self, your supervisor and the teachers in this school. I would like to ask you some questions about this area and will be interested in hearing your responses about the leadership practices that you have in place for ***planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring*** school activities that are related to the area of achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** (individual, team, and school goals for rigorous academic and social learning).

Starter Question: What does it mean to have ***High Standards for Student Learning*** at this school?

1. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** for (a) rigorous growth targets in learning for all students, and (b) targets of faculty performance that emphasize improvement in student learning, in order to achieve ***High Standards for Student Learning*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: HS-P]
 - **IG-CA [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that that this school ***plans*** for ***instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with a ***curricular alignment*** (pacing and subject matter demand by grades) focus to achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school plans for ***instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with an ***application emphasis*** (active student applications emphasis) that results in achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?
2. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***implements*** (a) (creates) buy-in among faculty for actions required to promote high standards of learning, (b) (creates) expectations that faculty maintain high standards for student learning, in order to achieve ***High Standards for Student Learning*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: HS-I]
 - **IG-CA [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***implements*** ***instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with a ***curricular alignment*** (pacing

and subject matter demand by grades) for achieving *High Standards for Student Learning* already prevalent in this school?

- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving *High Standards for Student Learning* already prevalent in this school?
3. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports* (a) (encourages) students to successfully achieve rigorous goals for student learning, and (b) teachers in meeting school goals, in order to achieve *High Standards for Student Learning* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: HS-S]
- **IG-CA [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a *curricular alignment* (pacing and subject matter demand by grades) for achieving *High Standards for Student Learning* already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving *High Standards for Student Learning* already prevalent in this school?
 - **SCLC-AS&P [Student Centered Learning Climate—Academic Support & Press]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports a student centered learning climate* with *academic support & press* (press for academic achievement in their classrooms, classroom personalism, classroom behavior, academic engagement, peer support for academic work) for achieving *High Standards for Student Learning* already prevalent in this school?
4. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* (a) for high standards for student learning when writing and implementing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), (b) (challenges) low expectations for special needs students, in order to achieve *High Standards for Student Learning* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: HS-A]
- **IG-CA [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a *curricular alignment*

- (pacing and subject matter demand by grades) focus for achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?
5. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* (a) rigorous goals for student learning to faculty, and (b) with families and the community about goals for rigorous student learning, in order to achieve ***High Standards for Student Learning*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: HS-C]
- **IG-CA: [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a *curricular alignment* (pacing and subject matter demand by grades) focus for achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?
6. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* (a) student learning again high standards of achievement, and (b) disaggregated test results, in order to achieve ***High Standards for Student Learning*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: HS-M]
- **IG-CA [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with *curricular alignment* (pacing and subject matter demand by grades) for achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***High Standards for Student Learning*** already prevalent in this school?

Other Possible Prompts/Follow Up Questions for any of the questions above:

1. What did that look like?
2. Why did it work?
3. Who else was involved?
4. What else happened as a result?
5. What else can you add?
6. Why did you try this strategy?
7. What made you think this would be successful?
8. How did this interview process make you think differently about your leadership practices?
9. What else should I have asked you about why you were scored high on *High Standards for Student Learning*?

Core Component: Rigorous Curriculum—Content and All Key Processes

You [name of principal] were scored at a high level in the area of ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** on the VAL-ED Survey. I am trying to identify specific and particularized leadership practices that you may be using to have earned this rating on this 360-degree evaluation from self, your supervisor and the teachers in this school. I would like to ask you some questions about this area and will be interested in hearing your responses about the leadership practices that you have in place for ***planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring*** school activities that are related to the area of achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** (ambitious academic content provided to all students in core academic subjects).

Starter Question: What does it mean to have ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** at this school?

1. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** (a) to develop a rigorous curriculum for all students, and (b) access to rigorous curricula for students with special needs, in order to achieve ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: RC-P]
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** for ***instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with an ***application emphasis*** (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SCLC-AS&P [Student Centered Learning Climate—Academic Support & Press]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** a ***student centered learning climate*** with ***academic support & press*** (press for academic achievement in their classrooms, classroom personalism, classroom behavior,

academic engagement, peer support for academic work) for achieving **Rigorous Curriculum – Content** already prevalent in this school?

- **IG-CA [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a *curricular alignment* (pacing and subject matter demand by grades) for achieving **Rigorous Curriculum – Content** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving **Rigorous Curriculum – Content** already prevalent in this school?
2. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* (a) (creates) a rigorous sequences of learning experiences/courses, and (b) a rigorous curriculum in all classes, in order to achieve **Rigorous Curriculum—Content** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: RC-I]
- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving **Rigorous Curriculum – Content** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SCLC-AS&P [Student Centered Learning Climate—Academic Support & Press]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* a *student centered learning climate* with *academic support & press* (press for academic achievement in their classrooms, classroom personalism, classroom behavior, academic engagement, peer support for academic work) for achieving **Rigorous Curriculum – Content** already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-CA [Instructional Guidance—Curriculum Alignment]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a *curricular alignment* (pacing and subject matter demand by grades) for achieving **Rigorous Curriculum – Content** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of

teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?

3. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports*** (a) (secures) the teaching materials necessary for a rigorous curriculum (b) teachers to teach a curriculum in consistent with state and national content standards, in order to achieve ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: RC-S]
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with an ***application emphasis*** (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SCLA-AS&P [Student Centered Learning Climate—Academic Support & Press]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports a student centered learning climate*** with ***academic support & press*** (press for academic achievement in their classrooms, classroom personalism, classroom behavior, academic engagement, peer support for academic work) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
4. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***advocates*** for (a) for a rigorous curriculum that honors the diversity of students and their families (b) and challenges faculty to teach a rigorous curriculum to students at risk of failure, in order to achieve ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: RC-A]
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***advocates for instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with an ***application emphasis*** (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SCLC-AS&P [Student Centered Learning Climate—Academic Support & Press]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***advocates for a student centered learning climate*** with ***academic support & press*** (press for academic achievement in their classrooms, classroom personalism, classroom behavior, academic engagement, peer support for academic work) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
5. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***communicates*** (a) (discusses) state curriculum frameworks, and (b) (discusses) the importance of

addressing the same academic content in special and regular program, in order to achieve ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school?

[CODE: RC-C]

- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SCLC-AS&P [Student Centered Learning Climate—Academic Support & Press]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* a *student centered learning climate* with *academic support & press* (press for academic achievement in their classrooms, classroom personalism, classroom behavior, academic engagement, peer support for academic work) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
6. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* (a) (evaluates) the extent to which all students complete a rigorous curricular program, and (b) (evaluates) the rigor of the program, in order to achieve ***Rigorous Curriculum—Content*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: RC-M]
- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SCLC-AS&P [Student Centered Learning Climate—Academic Support & Press]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* a *student centered learning climate* with *academic support & press* (press for academic achievement in their classrooms, classroom personalism, classroom behavior, academic engagement, peer support for academic work) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving ***Rigorous Curriculum – Content*** already prevalent in this school?

Other Possible Prompts/Follow Up Questions for any of the questions above:

1. What did that look like?
2. Why did it work?
3. Who else was involved?
4. What else happened as a result?
5. What else can you add?
6. Why did you try this strategy?
7. What made you think this would be successful?
8. How did this interview process make you think differently about your leadership practices?
9. What else should I have asked you about why you were scored high on *Rigorous Curriculum (Content)*?

Core Component: Quality Instruction and All Key Processes

You [name of principal] were scored at a high level in the area of ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** on the VAL-ED Survey. I am trying to identify specific and particularized leadership practices that you may be using to have earned this rating on this 360-degree evaluation from self, your supervisor and the teachers in this school. I would like to ask you some questions about this area and will be interested in hearing your responses about the leadership practices that you have in place for ***planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring*** school activities that are related to the area of achieving ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** (effective instructional practices that maximize student academic and social learning).

Starter Question: What does it mean to have ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** at this school?

1. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** (a) instructional services for students with special needs using assessment data, and (b) a schedule that enables quality instruction, in order to achieve ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: QI-P]
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** for ***instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with an ***application emphasis*** (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-BS [Instructional Guidance—Basic Skills]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** for ***instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with a focus on ***basic skills*** (didactic teaching of

basic skills) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?

- **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* that is prevalent in this school.
2. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* (a) (coordinates) efforts to improve instruction in all classes, and (b) recruits teachers with the expertise to deliver instruction that maximizes student learning, in order to achieve *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: QI-I]
- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-BS [Instructional Guidance—Basic Skills]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a focus on *basic skills* (didactic teaching of basic skills) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional

- guidance system) for achieving a ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** that is prevalent in this school.
3. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports*** (a) collaborative among faculty to improve instruction that maximizes student learning, and (b) teachers' opportunities to improve their instructional practices, in order to achieve ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school?
[CODE: QI-S]
- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with an ***application emphasis*** (active student applications emphasis) for achieving ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-BS [Instructional Guidance—Basic Skills]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports*** for ***instructional guidance*** (subject matter students study across grades) with a focus on ***basic skills*** (didactic teaching of basic skills) for achieving ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports*** for ***professional capacity*** (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on ***work orientation*** (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***supports*** for ***professional capacity*** (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for ***professional community*** (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** prevalent in this school.
4. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***advocates*** (a) for all students to regularly experience effective instruction, and (b) for opportunities for high quality instruction beyond the regular school day and school year, in order to achieve ***Quality Instruction—Pedagogy*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: QI-A]

- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-BS [Instructional Guidance—Basic Skills]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a focus on *basic skills* (didactic teaching of basic skills) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* for *professional capacity* (teacher’s capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* that is prevalent in this school.
5. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* (a) (discusses) instructional practices during faculty meetings, and (b) with faculty about removing barriers that prevent students from experiencing quality instruction, in order to achieve *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: QI-C]
- **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* about *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-BS [Instructional Guidance—Basic Skills]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a focus on *basic skills* (didactic teaching of basic skills) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* about *professional capacity* (teacher’s capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* that is prevalent in this school.

6. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* (a) and evaluates how instructional time is used, and (b) evaluates teachers' instructional practices, in order to achieve *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: QI-M]
 - **IG-AE [Instructional Guidance—Application Emphasis]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with an *application emphasis* (active student applications emphasis) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **IG-BS [Instructional Guidance—Basic Skills]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *instructional guidance* (subject matter students study across grades) with a focus on *basic skills* (didactic teaching of basic skills) for achieving *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a *Quality Instruction—Pedagogy* that is prevalent in this school.

Other Possible Prompts/Follow Up Questions for any of the questions above:

1. What did that look like?
2. Why did it work?
3. Who else was involved?
4. What else happened as a result?
5. What else can you add?
6. Why did you try this strategy?
7. What made you think this would be successful?
8. How did this interview process make you think differently about your leadership practices?

9. What else should I have asked you about why you were scored high on *Quality Instruction (Pedagogy)*?

Core Component: Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior and All Key Processes

You [name of principal] were scored at a high level in the area of ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** on the VAL-ED Survey. I am trying to identify specific and particularized leadership practices that you may be using to have earned this rating on this 360-degree evaluation from self, your supervisor and the teachers in this school. I would like to ask you some questions about this area and will be interested in hearing your responses about the leadership practices that you have in place for ***planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring*** school activities that are related to the area of achieving ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** (integrated communities of professional practice in the service of student academic and social learning; healthy school environment in which student learning is the central focus).

Starter Question: What does it mean to have ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** at this school?

1. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** (a) programs and policies that promote discipline and order, and (b) for a positive environment in which student learning is the central focus, in order to achieve a ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CLPB-P]
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** for ***professional capacity*** (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for ***professional community*** (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** for ***professional capacity*** (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on ***work orientation*** (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** that is prevalent in this school.

- **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* already prevalent in this school?
2. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* (a) a learning environment in which all students are known and cared for, and (b) (builds) a culture that honors academic achievement, in order to achieve a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CLPB-I]
- **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *implements* *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* already prevalent in this school?
3. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports* (a) (allocates) resources to build a culture focused on student learning, and (b) collaborative teams to improve instruction, in order to achieve a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*

Behavior (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CLPB-S]

- **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** that is prevalent in this school.
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *supports* *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** already prevalent in this school?
4. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* (a) a culture of learning that respects diversity of students, and (b) for students to be involved in the school community, in order to achieve a ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CLPB-A]
- **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a ***Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*** that is prevalent in this school.

- **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* for *professional capacity* (teacher’s capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* already prevalent in this school?
5. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* (a) with parents about the aspects of a positive school culture, and (b) (discusses) standards of professional behavior with faculty, in order to achieve a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CLPB-C]
- **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* regarding *professional capacity* (teacher’s capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what’s happening/or not, do we know what’s working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* for *professional capacity* (teacher’s capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community

influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* already prevalent in this school?

6. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* (a) the participation of every student in the social and academic activities, and (b) (assesses) the culture of the school from students' perspectives, in order to achieve a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CLPB-M]
- **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PC-WO [Professional Capacity—Work Orientation]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a focus on *work orientation* (teachers are willing to try new things, they are encouraged to stretch and grow, they would recommend this school to others, they are loyal to this school) for achieving a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* already prevalent in this school?

Other Possible Prompts/Follow Up Questions for any of the questions above:

1. What did that look like?
2. Why did it work?
3. Who else was involved?
4. What else happened as a result?
5. What else can you add?
6. Why did you try this strategy?
7. What made you think this would be successful?
8. How did this interview process make you think differently about your leadership practices?

9. What else should I have asked you about why you were scored high on *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*?

Core Component: Connections to External Communities and All Key Processes

You [name of principal] were scored at a high level in the area of *Connections to External Communities* on the VAL-ED Survey. I am trying to identify specific and particularized leadership practices that you may be using to have earned this rating on this 360-degree evaluation from self, your supervisor and the teachers in this school. I would like to ask you some questions about this area and will be interested in hearing your responses about the leadership practices that you have in place for *planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring* school activities that are related to the area of achieving *Connections to External Communities* (linkages to family and/or other people and institutions in the community that advance academic and social learning).

Starter Question: What does it mean to have *Connections to External Communities* at this school?

1. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *plans* (a) for school/community relations that revolves around the academic missions, and (b) for community outreach programs consistent with instructional goals, in order to achieve *Connections to External Communities* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school?

[CODE: CEC-P]

➤ **PCST-TtC [Parent Community School Ties—Teacher Ties to Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *parent community school ties* focused on *teacher ties to community* (teachers' knowledge of community, personal ties to community, use of community resources for teaching) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

➤ **PCST-PI [Parent Community School Ties—Parent Involvement]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *parent community school ties* focused on *parent involvement* (teachers outreach to parents, parents involvement in school) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

2. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* (a) programs to help address community needs, and (b) (builds) business partnerships to support social and academic learning, in order to achieve *Connections to External Communities* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CEC-I]

➤ **PCST-TtC [Parent Community School Ties—Teacher Ties to Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* *parent*

community school ties focused on *teacher ties to community* (teachers' knowledge of community, personal ties to community, use of community resources for teaching) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

- **PCST-PI [Parent Community School Ties—Parent Involvement]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *parent community school ties* focused on *parent involvement* (teachers outreach to parents, parents involvement in school) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.
3. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports* (a) (secures) additional resources through partnering with external agencies to enhance teaching and learning, and (b) (allocates) resource that build family and community partnerships to advance student learning, in order to achieve *Connections to External Communities* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CEC-S]
- **PCST-TtC [Parent Community School Ties—Teacher Ties to Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports parent community school ties* focused on *teacher ties to community* (teachers' knowledge of community, personal ties to community, use of community resources for teaching) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PCST-PI [Parent Community School Ties—Parent Involvement]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *supports* for *parent community school ties* focused on *parent involvement* (teachers outreach to parents, parents involvement in school) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.
4. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* (a) (promotes) mechanisms for reaching families who are least comfortable at school, and, (b) (challenges) teachers to work with community agencies to support students at risk, in order to achieve *Connections to External Communities* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CEC-A]
- **PCST-TtC [Parent Community School Ties—Teacher Ties to Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates parent community school ties* focused on *teacher ties to community* (teachers' knowledge of community, personal ties to community, use of community resources for teaching) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.
 - **PCST-PI [Parent Community School Ties—Parent Involvement]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates* for *parent*

community school ties focused on *parent involvement* (teachers outreach to parents, parents involvement in school) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

5. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* (a) (listens) to feedback from the community, and (b) (listens) to the diverse opinions and needs of all families, in order to achieve *Connections to External Communities* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CEC-C]

➤ **PCST-TtC [Parent Community School Ties—Teacher Ties to Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* *parent community school ties* focused on *teacher ties to community* (teachers' knowledge of community, personal ties to community, use of community resources for teaching) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

➤ **PCST-PI [Parent Community School Ties—Parent Involvement]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* for *parent community school ties* focused on *parent involvement* (teachers outreach to parents, parents involvement in school) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

6. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* (a) (collects) information to learn about resources and assets in the community, and (b) the effectiveness of community-school connections, in order to achieve *Connections to External Communities* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: CEC-M]

➤ **PCST-TtC [Parent Community School Ties—Teacher Ties to Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* *parent community school ties* focused on *teacher ties to community* (teachers' knowledge of community, personal ties to community, use of community resources for teaching) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

➤ **PCST-PI [Parent Community School Ties—Parent Involvement]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *parent community school ties* focused on *parent involvement* (teachers outreach to parents, parents involvement in school) for achieving *Connections to External Communities* that is prevalent in this school.

Other Possible Prompts/Follow Up Questions for any of the questions above:

1. What did that look like?
2. Why did it work?

3. Who else was involved?
4. What else happened as a result?
5. What else can you add?
6. Why did you try this strategy?
7. What made you think this would be successful?
8. How did this interview process make you think differently about your leadership practices?
9. What else should I have asked you about why you were scored high on on *Connections to External Communities*?

Component: Performance Accountability All Key Processes

You [name of principal] were scored at a high level in the area of *Performance Accountability* on the VAL-ED Survey. I am trying to identify specific and particularized leadership practices that you may be using to have earned this rating on this 360-degree evaluation from self, your supervisor and the teachers in this school. I would like to ask you some questions about this area and will be interested in hearing your responses about the leadership practices that you have in place for ***planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring*** school activities that are related to the area of achieving ***Performance Accountability*** (leadership holds itself and others responsible for realizing high standards of performance for student academic and social learning, individual and collective responsibility among the professional staff and students) .

Starter Question: What does it mean to have ***Performance Accountability*** at this school?

1. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** (a) for individual and collective accountability among faculty for student learning, and (b) for emphasizing accountability to stakeholders for student academic and social learning, in order to achieve ***Performance Accountability*** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: PA-P]
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school ***plans*** for ***school leadership*** with a focus on ***inclusion/instructional leadership*** (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving ***Performance Accountability*** that is prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-CHR [Professional Capacity—Changes in Human Resources]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school ***plans professional capacity*** (teacher’s capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) and ***changes in human resources*** (capacity to hire quality teachers and remove problematic teachers, and the intensity with which

they pursued both) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school?

- **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *plans* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school.
2. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* (a) (uses) faculty input to create methods to hold faculty accountable, and (b) social and academic accountability equitable for all students, in order to achieve *Performance Accountability* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: PA-I]
- **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Performance Accountability* already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-CHR [Professional Capacity—Changes in Human Resources]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) and *changes in human resources* (capacity to hire quality teachers and remove problematic teachers, and the intensity with which they pursued both) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *implements* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving a *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school.

3. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school **supports** (a) (allocates) time to evaluate student learning, and (b) time to evaluate faculty for student learning, in order to achieve **Performance Accountability** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: PA-S]
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school **supports** for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving **Performance Accountability** already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-CHR [Professional Capacity—Changes in Human Resources]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school **supports** *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) and *changes in human resources* (capacity to hire quality teachers and remove problematic teachers, and the intensity with which they pursued both) for achieving **Performance Accountability** that is prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school **supports** for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving **Performance Accountability** that is prevalent in this school.
4. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school **advocates** (a) (challenges) faculty who blame others for student failure, and (b) that all students are accountable for achieving high levels of performance in both academic and social learning, in order to achieve **Performance Accountability** (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: PA-A]
 - **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school **advocates** for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving **Performance Accountability** already prevalent in this school?

- **PC-CHR [Professional Capacity—Changes in Human Resources]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) and *changes in human resources* (capacity to hire quality teachers and remove problematic teachers, and the intensity with which they pursued both) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *advocates for professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school.
5. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* (a) (discusses) progress toward meeting school goals with parents, and (b) to faculty how accountability results will be used for school improvement, in order to achieve *Performance Accountability* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: PA-C]
- **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* about *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Performance Accountability* already prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-CHR [Professional Capacity—Changes in Human Resources]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* about *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) and *changes in human resources* (capacity to hire quality teachers and remove problematic teachers, and the intensity with which they pursued both) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school?
 - **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *communicates* about *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's

working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school.

6. How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* (a) (analyzes) the influence of faculty evaluations on the rigor of the curriculum, and (b) the accuracy and appropriateness of data used for student accountability, in order to achieve *Performance Accountability* (or synonyms provided by principal from starter question) that is prevalent in this school? [CODE: PA-M]

- **SL-I/IL [School Leadership—Inclusive/Instructional Leadership]:** How do you engage our faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *school leadership* (driver for improvement) with a focus on *inclusion/instructional leadership* (reaching out to faculty encouraging parent community involvement, extent of teacher involvement in school decisions, parent and community influence on school improvement efforts) for achieving *Performance Accountability* already prevalent in this school?
- **PC-CHR [Professional Capacity—Changes in Human Resources]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) and *changes in human resources* (capacity to hire quality teachers and remove problematic teachers, and the intensity with which they pursued both) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school?
- **PC-PC [Professional Capacity—Professional Community]:** How do you engage your faculty to ensure that this school *monitors* for *professional capacity* (teacher's capacity to problem solve regarding classroom concerns and to coordinate instructional work) with a mindset for *professional community* (teacher classroom work public for colleague and external consultant examination; critical dialogue about what's happening/or not, do we know what's working or not, collaboration among teachers to strengthen the instructional guidance system) for achieving *Performance Accountability* that is prevalent in this school.

Other Possible Prompts/Follow Up Questions for any of the questions above:

1. What did that look like?
2. Why did it work?
3. Who else was involved?
4. What else happened as a result?
5. What else can you add?
6. Why did you try this strategy?
7. What made you think this would be successful?

8. How did this interview process make you think differently about your leadership practices?
9. What else should I have asked you about why you were scored high on *Performance Accountability*?

APPENDIX C

NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Think of one or more critical experiences (life and work) that have impacted who you are now as a leader or informed the leadership practices you currently have in place in this school.
 - Thinking back to a particular experience, what do you remember?
 - If there was one main memory of this time of putting strong leadership practices in place, it would be
 - How would you say has it influenced you?
2. Within this effort of putting strong leadership practices in place to support ELA-learners, do you remember a particularly stressful period?
 - How would you say has it influenced you?
3. What role did others play in this event (efforts toward implementing LP) (critical others)?
 - If there was one thing you would say about that event (LP efforts) it would be
4. How would you describe or tell of the challenging influence and long lasting effects?

APPENDIX D

ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS AND INDICATORS CODING FRAMEWORK

ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS (ES) – INDICATORS (I)	(ES)	(I)	ES-I CODES
School Leadership – School Leadership	SL	I/IL	SL-I/IL
Parent-Community-School Ties – Teacher’s Ties to the Community	PCST	TC	PCST- TC
Parent-Community-School Ties – Parent Involvement	PCST	PI	PCST-PI
Professional Capacity – Teacher Background	PC	TB	PC-TB
Professional Capacity – Frequency of Professional Development	PC	FPD	PC-FPD
Professional Capacity – Quality of Professional Development	PC	QPD	PC-QPD
Professional Capacity – Changes in Human Resources	PC	CHR	PC-CHR
Professional Capacity – Work Orientation	PC	WO	PC-WO
Professional Capacity – Professional Community	PC	PC	PC-PC
Student Centered Learning Climate – Safety and Order	SCLC	S&O	SCLC-S&O
Student Centered Learning Climate – Academic Support and Press	SCLC	AS&P	SCLC-AS&P
Instructional Guidance – Curriculum Alignment	IG	CA	IG-CA
Instructional Guidance – Basic Skills	IG	BS	IG-BS
Instructional Guidance – Application Emphasis	IG	AE	IG-AE

Note: Shaded rows are **not** included in interview protocol questions.

APPENDIX E ES-I Codes within the VAL-ED Codes						
ES-I CODES		KEY PROCESSES				
CORE COMPONENTS	Plan	Implement	Support	Advocate	Communicate	Monitor
High Standards	HS-P IG-CA IG-AE	HS-I IG-CA IG-AE	HS-S IG-CA IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	HS-A IG-CA IG-AE	HS-C IG-CA IG-AE	HS-M IG-CA IG-AE
Rigorous Curriculum	RC-P IG-AE SCLC-AS&P IG-CA SL-SL	RC-I IG-AE SCLC-AS&P IG-CA SL-SL	RC-S IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	RC-A IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	RC-C IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	RC-M IG-AE SCLC-AS&P SL-SL
Quality Instruction	QI-P IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO	QI-I IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO PC-PC	QI-S IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO PC-PC	QI-A IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO	QI-C IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO	QI-M IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO PC-PC
Culture of Learning /Professional Behavior	CLPB-P PC-PC PC-WO SL-UIL	CLPB-I PC-PC PC-WO SL-UIL	CLPB-S PC-PC PC-WO SL-UIL	CLPB-A PC-PC PC-WO	CLPB-C PC-PC PC-WO SL-UIL	CLPB-M PC-PC PC-WO
Connection to External Communities	CEC-P PCST- IG PCST-PI	CEC-I PCST- IG PCST-PI	CEC-S PCST- IG PCST-PI	CEC-A PCST- IG PCST-PI	CEC-C PCST- IG PCST-PI	CEC-M PCST- IG PCST-PI
Performance Accountability	PA-P SL-UIL PC-CHR C-PC	PA-I SL-UIL PC-CHR PC-PC	PA-S SL-UIL PC-CHR PC-PC	PA-A SL-UIL PC-CHR PC-PC	PA-C SL-UIL PC-CHR PC-PC	PA-M SL-SL PC-CHR PC-PC

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